

The Chinese Rites Controversy - Dominican Viewpoint -

By

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The lifting of the prohibition of the Chinese Rites in 1939 by a decree of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (today Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) marked the beginning of a noticeable decrease in the literature about the famous controversy. Today only a few professional historians specialized on the Chinese missions and the Chinese Church seem interested in shedding more light on the centuries-old dispute.^a

But the fact remains that the controversy had an enormous impact on the slow pace of evangelization of China, as well as on the study of missionary methods and on awakening European interest about things Chinese. "It is doubtful – says James S. Cummins – if a worse or more fruitless struggle has ever shaken the Catholic Church".¹ George Dunne, for his part, states that "certainly at no time before, and probably at no time since, has any question affecting China been the object of such universal, feverish, even impassionate interest in the European world".² Substantially, in its principles, the problem of the Chinese Rites did not end with their suppression in a particular point in history. It is as old as

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^aThis article has been written on the occasion of the International Symposium on the Chinese Rites Controversy held at the University of San Francisco, on October 16-18, 1992. The reader will find at the end of the article two appendixes: one illustrating the Chinese names used here; and the other, a report on said International Symposium.

¹JAMES S. CUMMINS, *The travels and controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1618-1686*, Cambridge, 1962, I. p. XLIX.

²GEORGE H. DUNNE, S.J., *Generation of giants*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1962, p. 230.

the Church and it will continue to reappear in every age under the broad context of inculturation, *aggiornamento* and ecumenical approach to other cultures and religions. In China itself today, the penetration and acceptance of the Gospel finds a stumbling block in the sinization efforts of the "patriotic Church", a thorny question that may give the Catholic Church as much headache as the old Rites controversy.

Expressed in very simple terms, the Rites controversy started as a well-meant dispute (continued through the 17th and 18th centuries) waged by two missionary groups over methods of evangelizing China: On one side, almost all the Jesuits (sometimes referred to as Riccians, after Fr. Matteo Ricci, S.J.), and on the other hand, the friar missionaries from the Philippines (Dominicans and Franciscans). Surely both groups had a single common ideal, the conversion of China to Christianity; but they strongly disagreed about the means to attain that conversion. Strangely enough, it was a battle of arguments waged by foreigners on Chinese soil, since the Chinese themselves, for the greater part of the controversy, did not take part in it, even though it touched sensitive cords of their culture and religious beliefs.

The problem was many sided: How should Christianity be presented to the Chinese? How much of the Chinese traditions and practices could be assimilated by the tenets of Christian religion? And in the first place, were the Chinese ritual and ceremonial codes religious in nature or purely civic and folkloric? What was in the Chinese mind when the people performed those rites? How far could the missionaries go in combining Chinese ceremonies with Christian doctrine and praxis? Should the Gospel be presented directly and clearly, or diplomatically with some reservations so as not to offend Chinese sensitivities?

To add fuel to the fire, several human factors contributed to furthering the polarization of the missionary groups. By nationality or by free adoption the missionaries involved were subjects of two rival colonial powers in the Far East, Portugal and Spain, both of which invoked for their national interest the rights of their respective *padroado* or *patronato*, granted to them by the Church to intervene in ecclesiastical matters, like creation of dioceses and parishes, appointments to ecclesiastical offices, etc.

To make things even worse, just before the controversy started, Dominicans and Jesuits had engaged in another dispute in Europe on the subject of divine grace and human freedom, which ended in some accommodation worked out by the Holy See. But some feeling of indisposition remained in the two Institutes, which reappeared in China around a more practical problem focussed under two different theories of moral theology, namely, *probabilism* and *probabiliorism*. Regarding missionary methods, the Jesuits tended to attract the upper classes first; they used the sciences as a frontal instrument of evangelization and tried to reach the Imperial

Palace. Some of them are recorded to have built canons for the imperial army. Some looked down on the friars with certain disdain; they claimed China as their reservation and called the friars intruders in their field and stigmatized them as incompetent and imprudent in their preaching the Gospel.

The friars from the Philippines, for their part, concentrated their efforts in preaching the Gospel directly, and started with the lower social classes, possibly considering the study of the sciences as unnecessary in presenting the Gospel. As messengers of God's word they never felt conscious of inferiority complex; and when the controversy reached boiling point, they also fell in the trap of labelling their opponents, calling them exclusivistic, laxist and rebellious to ecclesiastical authority.

The literature produced by the century-long controversy, and by centuries of aftermath, was enormous. Unfortunately, on the side of the opponents to the rites, most of their writings have remained unpublished. It is well known that selling their products is not the most outstanding characteristic of the Dominicans. At the height of the dispute, their brethren had to be ordered by their superiors in Rome to send more frequent reports. The Jesuit production was far more voluminous both in manuscript and in printed form. The famous Annual Letters, which, by Constitution, all Provincial Superiors had to send to the Central Curia annually constitute an inexhaustible source of information on their missions everywhere. Their Prepositus or Superior General was said to be the best informed person in Europe, over and above the Pope. Jesuit writings on the Chinese rites before 1939 is calculated to exceed the Dominican production by a ratio of ten to one.³

The Riccian side has advertised its missionary achievements in China with a lot more color and flavour than their opponents. Their early missionaries are made to appear as a "generation of giants", noted for their understanding and tolerance of Chinese mentality and culture. To be sure, this attractive image strongly appeals to the pluralistic, democratic and religiously indifferent society of today. By comparison, the Dominican position will look more conservative, traditional, security conscious and rigid, less attractive not only to non-Catholic historians, but even to Catholic writers, who may judge their attitude to the rites as reactionary and embarrassing. Some authors ignore their participation entirely. The author of the article "Chinese Rites Controversy" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* does not even mention the word Dominican. Yet the Dominican missionaries who took part in the controversy never doubted about the righteousness of their cause fought for the best interest of the Church and of the Chinese converts. In the end, it was their position that was upheld by the Holy See under the circumstances and mentality of the 18th century.

³Taking as an example G. Dunne's work (see preceeding note), in its bibliographical list, 43 authors are identified as Jesuits, compared to four Dominicans and four Franciscans.

Both sides maintained what they thought in conscience to be correct and true. Both committed blunders and lacked in charity at one time or another, and both had their critics and their *leyenda negra*. As far as this paper is concerned, the Dominican side has been the most misunderstood. And so, on the occasion of this First International Symposium ever to be held on this matter, this paper attempts at focusing and explain the Dominican viewpoint: What their stand was, and for what reasons they clung to their position.

2. The Workers at Daybreak

On December 3, 1552, Francis Xavier died in the islet of Sancian, off the coast of China, the empire he had dreamed to conquer for the Gospel of Christ. His mission in India and the Moluccas had produced an extraordinary harvest for the Church. In Japan he had made an heroic but almost fruitless apostolate. China was only a dream to be realized by his brethren the Jesuits, the Lord's laborers at daybreak for that particular vineyard.

In 1557 the Portuguese, the European power to whose area of jurisdiction China had fallen in the famous partition of the world by Alexander VI, founded Macao as a trading port and commercial city, which became, by Chinese agreement, the only recognized gate to deal with the Celestial Empire. The Jesuits arrived in Macao in 1562, and soon a few of them attempted to penetrate the fabulous Kingdom of Cathay, even without Chinese permission but hopeful to obtain it. They were Fathers Melchor Nunes Barreto (1563), Francisco Barreto (1565) and Juan Bautista Ribera (1568). The vigilant and suspicious Chinese sent them back to Macao. China looked totally impenetrable to the Gospel. There was no hope of converting China, Ribera remarked, "unless one has the recourse to force, and unless they give way before the soldiers", or as Barreto put it, "unless the princes force the sovereign of China to grant to the missionaries the right to preach, and to the natives the rights to hear the truth".⁴

Although such adventuristic views were supported by traditional scholastic theology, no Christian prince in the 16th century ever came near to covet the conquest of China. At most, missionaries could hope to count with the backing of the colonial power of the day in the South China Sea, Portugal. But nowhere in the Asian subcontinent did the Portuguese try beyond the periphery. Its soldiers never went beyond Macao.

With or without political backing, the Jesuit policy of evangelization of China started to shape following the guidelines issued by the farsighted Superior of the Society of Jesus in the Far East Father Alessandro Valignano soon after his arrival in Macao in 1578. For him, the only possible way to evangelize China was a new method not yet adopted fully

⁴Quoted by DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

in other missions and countries of the world at that time. Christianity had to appear less European and more Chinese. Consequently, two missionaries, well prepared for this task, succeeded in entering China: Fr. Michele Ruggieri and Fr. Matteo Ricci. Both of them were Jesuits, but not Portuguese. They, however, come under the Portuguese *padroado*.

In 1583, Fathers Ruggieri and Ricci achieved what no other missionary had attained before. They were allowed to establish a *permanent* mission in Shaoking (Chao-Ching). And after Ruggieri returned to Europe five years later, Ricci continued in that mission, ever dreaming of some day reaching Peking and seeing the Emperor. His first dream was fulfilled. After twelve years of patient waiting in various cities, Shaochow, Nanking and Nanchang, finally he entered the forbidden capital city in 1601 and stayed there until his death in 1611.

During those years of residence and apostolate, Ricci put in practice a new approach to evangelization that would make his name famous to posterity. He aimed first, not at obtaining rapid and numerous conversions but at making Christianity palatable and acceptable to the Chinese mind and lifestyle. This adaptation policy would please the Chinese, but, as later realized, could be subject to misunderstandings and to adverse reactions.

Firstly, he started with his personal external bearing. He begun to dress as a Buddhist monk or bonzo until he realized that the monks were lowly regarded in China, and so he changed his dress for that of the cultured and sophisticated *literati*, the class of the Confucian scholars from whose ranks the mandarins who administered the Empire were recruited. In his behaviour, Ricci and fellow-Jesuits copied many of their customs and manners. They let their beards grow. They kept servants and gave expensive presents to the influential classes. And they had themselves carried about the streets on sedan chairs, just as the high classes used to do.

Secondly, Ricci cultivated the Chinese language and read the Chinese classics in order to assimilate as much of the Chinese culture as possible. In this respect he tried to search for the meaning of the original Confucian texts (which the contemporary scholars had misinterpreted), in the supposition and hope that there were points of contact between the ancient classic Chinese culture and Christianity. And if philosophy could help the Gospel, so could science. In order to win the admiration and sympathy of the scholarly class, Ricci, a scientist and mathematician himself, brought, to China some western scientific instruments, like maps and solar diagrams. And soon after entering Peking, he sent to the imperial palace a number of gifts meant to arouse the imperial curiosity and interest: Books, paintings, a clavicord, maps and a striking clock. Ricci's disciples followed a similar policy, the policy of using "human means" to attain the divine end that was the conversion of China to Christ.

So far, this first results were promising and the wind seem to blow favorably. Until Ricci had to deal with the more practical business of directing the life of his catechumens and converts. In order to obviate certain feelings of displeasure, Ricci permitted to his new Christians to continue practicing some of their traditional customs, which other missionaries, even within the ranks of his Society of Jesus, would – rightly or wrongly – consider clearly superstitious, if not idolatrous. And similarly, he kept from the knowledge and notice of the new converts – at least temporarily – certain fundamental Christian tenets or practices that he thought were offensive to Chinese tastes and mentality. And it was precisely this latter aspect of Ricci's accommodation policy, the permissions and the omissions, that would very soon provoke the fateful controversy over the Chinese rites, something, however, Ricci could not foresee.

To a remark of the 16th century Franciscan Fr. Pedro de Alfaro that "to enter China is to attempt to reach the moon" – an impossibility – a modern Jesuit has responded that actually Ricci "reached the moon." He did, but not to his total satisfaction. He died without seeing the Emperor, the "Son of Heaven," "isolated in godlike splendor by a world of 16.000 eunuchs." He could not, therefore, obtain the desired authorization freely to preach the Gospel anywhere in China. He certainly made friendship with the highest officials of the State, some of whom, at his death, mourned "the western become Chinese." But it is doubtful whether their friendship ever moved their hearts an inch in the direction of conversion to the "foreign religion."

Undoubtedly, the bridge of understanding Ricci built was impressive to the extent of being perceived as worth guarding and preserving, so that the Jesuits begun to think that it would be risky to hand Ricci's gains over to missionaries unfamiliar with his policies and methods. China, they thought, was different from the rest of the world mentally, culturally and politically. To evangelize China the work of Ricci should continue by a highly prepared brand of missionaries trained in the human sciences and versed in Chinese culture and language. What would happen if some other missionaries, particularly those working in the Philippines, would come to try methods perhaps successfully tried in countries of primitive cultures like America and the Philippines?

In order to offset that eventuality, the Society of Jesus took a preemptive measure. In 1585, the Society obtained from Pope Gregory XIII the Papal Brief *Ex pastorali officio* (January 28), by which the right to evangelize China and Japan was reserved to the same Society of Jesus with exclusion of other religious Institutes.⁵ China became their missionary reservation and monopoly.

⁵LEO MAGNINO, *Pontificia Nipponica*, Rome 1947, I, pp. 26-27.

3. Laboures at Noontime from the Philippines

Jesuit apprehensions about a possible arrival of missionaries from the Philippines Islands were not without foundation. Since the conquest of the archipelago by the Adelantado Don Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565, groups of missionaries arrived periodically there to establish their Institutes for the evangelization of those islands. The Augustinians were the first in 1565, followed by the Franciscans in 1579. The Jesuits arrived in 1581 accompanying the first Bishop of Manila, Domingo de Salazar, a Dominican. And in 1587 the Dominicans joined the others. The three friar institutes carried in their apostolic bags almost one hundred years of preaching experience in America, and all of them had their eyes set on China.

It is often stated that the methods used in the conversion of the uncultured American Indians were not fit for the conversion of the sophisticated Chinese; and that the European Christianity implanted in America could not be easily offered to the millenary culture of China. Let it be said, at the outset, that even in America, long before St. Ignatius of Loyola founded his Society, and before Roberto Nobili and Matteo Ricci applied their adaptation policies in Asia, the friar missionaries had made remarkable feats of adaptability to the Amerindians, shedding many of their European ways. "One finds astonishing the capacity of the friars to work without any precise blueprint or model."⁶ The New world was an entirely new field for the seeds of the Gospel, and therefore new concepts and techniques had to be found in casting the seeds away from the European soil.

Writing about the missionaries of Fokien, historian Antonio S. Rosso says, perhaps with some exaggeration, that "not a single feature of the so-called Jesuit method [of adaptation] was alien to the friars". Even the Jesuit George Dunne has to admit that "some of the most forceful writings against Europeanism was done by the Spanish friars, and the practice of adaptation was not unknown in Mexico."⁷ Many critics of Ricci who frowned at his hiding some of the dogmas of the Christian faith from his converts would be surprised to know that the Franciscan Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumarraga, reprinted for his flock the famous catechism of C. Ponce, censured by some contemporaries as Erasmian, in which the author omitted the five Commandments of the Church and some of the seven Sacraments, so as to avoid possible confusion in the Indians between their pagan past and the Christian teachings.⁸

⁶J. S. CUMMINS, *Two missionary methods in China* (reprint from *Archivo Ibero-Americano*, XXXVIII, 1978, Nos. 149-152), p. 67.

⁷DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 229.- ANTONIO SISTO ROSSO, OFM, *Apostolic Legations in China*, South Pasadena, 1948, p. 10

⁸M. BATAILLON, *Erasme et l'Espagne* (Spanish trans., Mexico 1966), p. 831. Even as late as the 19th century, Menendez Pelayo found the book "more dangerous for what it omits than for what it says", not mentioning papal supremacy, purgatory and indulgences (Cf. Cummins, *Two missionary methods*, p. 69).

There was no area in the Indians' cultural and religious life in which the friars did not show keen interest and curiosity. "The result [of the Mendicants' work] – wrote L. Hanke – was a methodically arranged mass of verified information on the gods worshipped by the Indians, their fiestas, their ideas of immortality and death ceremonies, astrology, witch-doctors, rhetoric and philosophy, lords, government, merchant and mechanical arts, vices, virtues . . . and on the conquest of Mexico as the Indians saw it". Many friars, like the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún, handled many of the basic problems in religious terminology and ritual that Ricci faced in China. Others, like the Dominicans Antonio de Montesinos and Bartolomé de Las Casas championed a mighty struggle in defence of the human rights of the natives. Las Casas dug deeply into their civilization and culture, their laws and systems of government, extolling them excessively over the cultures of Greece and Rome. It is true, on the other hand, that the friar missionaries were guilty of iconoclasm towards many pagan symbols, but it was only as a means to eradicate certain inhuman practices, shocking by any natural or Christian standards, like human sacrifices and cannibalism. In general, where faith and morals were not involved, the missionaries showed great flexibility and they adjusted to the converts.⁹

Although printed narratives on China did not circulate in Europe prior to the *Tractado das cousas da China* (Evora, 1569) by the Portuguese Dominican Gaspar da Cruz, earlier sketchy news about the fabulous land of Cathay made a strong appeal to the missionaries in America, who believed that the Chinese people were highly intelligent and offered greater challenge to evangelization than the intellectually naive and docile natives in America. The first institutes that established missions in the Philippines thought of the Islands as a well-positioned springboard from which they could make a leap to China, Japan, Siam and Cambodia. Except for the Jesuits who left those fields to their brethren stationed in India and Macao, those Institutes, once arrived in Manila, hurried to knock at the doors of China.

The Augustinians made the first attempt in 1572 when Frs. Agustín de Alburquerque and Alonso de Alvarado actually reached China, but they were expelled by the authorities almost upon arrival. Three years later, two other Augustinians, Frs. Martín de Rada and Jerónimo Martín accompanied some envoys of Philippine Governor Guido de Lavezares in China, in a mission of trying to establish friendly relations between the Spanish colony and the Vice-Roy of Fokien and of obtaining permission for preaching the Christian religion. The Vice-Roy treated them courteously and had good words from them. but he sent them back to Manila. Rada brought with him "more than one hundred Chinese books" on a variety of subjects, and he wrote a lengthy report about his experiences and observations, "giving to Europe the first authentic picture of China and its institu-

⁹For further elaboration and recourse to sources, see CUMMINS, *Two missionary methods*, pp. 68-75.

tions."¹⁰ But having failed in their main objective, the most the Spanish Augustinians could do was to found a convent in Macao in 1586, which they had to cede to their Portuguese confreres ten years later.

The Franciscans were even more determined in their efforts to penetrate China. In 1579 Fathers Pedro de Alfaro and Agustin de Torrellas sailed for China without due permission from the Philippine authorities. They managed to land in Canton, but after several appearances in court and many vexations they were forced to proceed to Macao where they founded a convent. Three years later, in 1582, as many as eight of their brethren, headed by Fr. Jeronimo de Burgos, also entered China only to meet suspicion, hostility and ill-treatment in jail. One of them died in prison. The rest ended in Macao.¹¹ The Dominicans, late arrivals in the Philippines, followed their example. In 1590, their Superior Fr. Juan de Castro, accompanied by Fr. Miguel de Benavides, landed in Fokien, but their attempt to establish a mission was as futile as the efforts of their fellow-missionaries from the Philippines.¹²

In spite of these failures, China remained a dream for the friars, who thought that such an immense and promising field was wide enough to accommodate any number of evangelical labourers without limit. Not even the above-mentioned Papal Brief of Gregory XIII in 1585 made them lose hope. At the accession of Sixtus V to the Pontifical throne one year later, 1586, another Brief (*Dum ad Uberes*) was issued on November 15, 1586, granting faculty to the new Superior Provincial of the Franciscans in the Philippines "to found churches and convents in any land or kingdom of the Oriental Indies, including China".¹³ In 1600 Clement VIII (*Constitution Onerosa pastoralis officio*) permitted all religious institutes to evangelize China and Japan, but only entering there by way of the Portuguese Indies.¹⁴ Finally, the limiting clause of this document was removed by the

¹⁰GASPAR DE SAN AGUSTIN, OSA, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas (1565-1615)*, Ed. Manuel Merino, OSA, Madrid 1975, pp. 367-371; 437-460; MARTIN DE RADA, *Relación del viaje que se hizo en la tierra de la China de 1575 años*, published by ISACIO RODRIGUEZ, OSA, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana de Smo. Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas*, vol. XIV, Manila 1978, p. 338; JUAN GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA, OSA, *Historia del Gran Reyno de la China*, Medina del Campo, 1595, p. 80, quoted by RODRIGUEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 291. But neither his brief stay in China, nor the hundred books he brought nor the report he wrote can make Rada one of the greatest sinologists, as somebody has called him.

¹¹MARCELO DE RIBADENEIRA, OFM, *Historia de las Islas del Archipiélago y Reinos de la Gran China*, lib. II, cap. I-IV. Ed. Historical Conservation Society, Manila, 1970, vol. I, pp. 101,109; DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹²DIEGO ADUARTE, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, (Manila 1640), ed. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 1662, I, pp. 187-211.

¹³L. MAGNINO, *op. cit.*, I pp. 36-39.

¹⁴L. MAGNINO, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-67. The Bishops and theologians of the Philippines asked Bishop Cerqueira, of Japan, not to publish this Papal Brief until new information expected from Rome and Spain arrived. Meanwhile, the first Dominican missionaries left for Japan in 1602, and Cerqueira published the Papal Brief in 1604, adding his order for the mendicants to leave Japan. But the Mendicant Superiors knew that the matter was being reconsidered in Rome to allow access to the East Indies by any route, as it actually happened in 1608.

next Pope, Paul V, who in 1608 (Constitution *Sedis Apostolicae*) authorized all missionaries to have access to China and Japan by whatever route they wanted to proceed thereto. The same indult was ratified by Pope Urban VIII in 1633 (Constitution *Ex debito pastoralis officii*, February 22).¹⁵ It was clear that after 1608 no ecclesiastical provision stood in the way of the friars from the Philippines to enter China. However, they knew that if they did, they would certainly incur the wrath of the Portuguese *padroado* and the displeasure of the Jesuits.

The friars had themselves partly to blame for their initial failures to enter China. They went there without a basic commodity and provision: the Chinese language. We are told by the Augustinian Rada that his first request to the Governor of Fokien upon arrival was to be allowed to stay in order to learn Chinese.¹⁶ But with regard to linguistic preparation, there was a notable exception: the Dominicans.

4. The Chinatown of the Dominicans

"The *main purpose* of the new [Dominican] Province [of the Holy Rosary in the Philippines] – said historian Fr. Diego Aduarte writing the history of this Province in the early years of the 17th century – was to promulgate the Gospel in the great kingdom of China." The first shipload of missionaries who embarked in Acapulco for the Philippines are said by Aduarte to know little about the Islands, but had heard many great things about the Chinese people, their sharpness of mind and their great political system and government". So obsessed were they with that fabulous land that of the eighteen founding friars waiting for the Manila galleon in Mexico, three were sent ahead, not bound for Manila, but directly for the city of Macao, there to establish a house and "to try the entry into the great China, seeming to them that the gate was not as closed as some people wanted to persuade them to be." The three Dominicans, Fathers Antonio de Arcediano, Alonso Delgado and Bartolome Lopez, arrived in Macao in September of that year and managed to found a convent under the patronage of the Virgin of the Rosary. But, as it had been the case with previous attempts, the Portuguese authorities did not permit the three Spaniards to stay in the colony for long.¹⁷

This setback did not deter the Dominicans settled in Manila from sending a mission to Fokien in 1590. As said earlier, that mission was composed by Frs. Juan de Castro and Miguel de Benavides, and followed a pattern similar to those of the Augustinians and Franciscans. The two were arrested near the coast of Fokien under the suspicion of espionage

¹⁵The text of both Papal documents is in L. MAGNINO, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-71 and 160-161 respectively.

¹⁶RADA, *Relación del viaje*, in I. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, p. 282.

¹⁷ADUARTE, *Historia*, I, pp. 48,51-55; II, p. 119.

for the Philippine colonial government and were brought to trial. The court authorities were offended at the mere statement of the missionaries that they had come "to *teach* a doctrine of salvation." Of course, they were sent back to Manila. But something caught the attention of the authorities. Since someone had accused the two friars of espionage, Benavides wrote in prison a letter in Chinese characters to the vice-royal tribunal proving the falsity of the charge. The judge could not believe that the missionary had written the letter himself, for it was written in good style. So he asked Benavides to write a new plea before his eyes, and the friar did it to the astonishment of the authorities.¹⁸

From the foregoing, there are three points to underline about the Dominicans involving themselves in the evangelization of China. First, they had thought of China long before the Empire was opened to the Gospel; second, by the time they actually established themselves permanently, there was no Papal prohibition against them going there. And thirdly, when even they made their first attempt, they had considerable command of the Chinese language, as shown by the successful test of Fr. Miguel de Benavides.

Benavides' knowledge of Chinese has an easy explanation. He had learned the characters from the Chinese settled in Manila, living in the district called the *Parian*. For purposes of missionary training, what Macao was to Jesuits, the *Parian* (and later *Binondo*) was to the Dominicans. Arriving in Manila in 1587, the sons of St. Dominic were entrusted by Bishop Domingo Salazar with the task of evangelizing the Chinese colony. Actually the *Parian* was their first ministry in the Philippines and it was to be their longest. They still continue today in that Chinatown of Manila. In 1588 two priests, Frs. Miguel de Benavides and Juan de Maldonado, took up residence in the heart of the *Parian*, and one year later a third missionary joined them, Fr. Juan Cobo, who wrote that the "Chinese have developed an extraordinary affection for our Order and for us. And in this very year, to the glory of God, about one hundred of them have been baptized."

To catechize them, the Dominicans set themselves to learn Chinese, which they did quickly and quite well, and they even studied their culture. Most of the settlers – wrote Bishop Salazar to king Philip II – were traders and artisans, bakers and porters, tailors and shoemakers, ironworkers and silversmiths, painters, sculptors, masons, carpenters, weavers and candle-makers.¹⁹ making of the *Parian* a typical show window of Chinese life as seeing in any typical Fokien town. Still, most of them belonged to the lower classes, prompting once Fr. Cobo to refer to them

¹⁸ADUARTE, *Historia*, I, pp. 187-194.

¹⁹DOMINGO SALAZAR, "Carta Relación de las cosas de China y de los Chinos del Parian de Manila (June 24, 1590)", in CARLOS SANZ, *Primitivas relaciones de España con Asia y Oceanía*, Madrid 1958, pp. 239-252.

as outcasts, ad the "scum of the earth." Having made the first catechumens and neophytes, the Dominicans provided them with a catechism, the *Doctrina Christiana* in Chinese, one of the first three books printed by the first Philippine printing press in 1593. Four friars took part in its composition; a Chinese non-Christian printer took charge of printing it by xylographic process; and the text is written in the Amoy or Hokkien dialect, the language of the colonists.

Fr. Juan Cobo was more generous with them when, in the next page of the same report, observes that they were "clever and sharp knowers of their letters, of the movements of the heavens, of moral matters, good manners and etiquette, of the administration of justice and the laws, because they were exceptionally versed in things about Moral Philosophy, which is not properly science."²⁰ There were literati among them. And for that scholarly class, and perhaps with an eye on the learned Chinese of the continent, Cobo undertook the composition of a most remarkable book, which was printed at the same time as the *Doctrina Christiana* in the year 1593, known today by its given title *Pien Chien-Chiao Cheng-Ch'uan Shih-Lu* (*Shih-Lu*, for short).

Cobo's *Shih-Lu* has been considered by the modern discoverer of the only existing copy at the National Library of Madrid, the Catholic priest Fr. Fang-Hao, as "le premier livre d'introduction des sciences occidentaux au Chinois," a highly complimentary remark that would have made Matteo Ricci a bit jealous. In fact, it is more a work of Christian apologetics than a book of science, but it does contain some common western scientific ideas illustrated with corresponding artistic designs in the fields of cosmology and zoology. In this respect the *Shih-Lu* has the importance of appearing before Ricci published his first scientific book in Chinese. Cobo's work has the additional merit of being written "in the most pure classic literature." Regarding its contents, Cobo's work offers to the readers the result of several philosophico-theological discussions held in the *Parian* between himself and some Chinese scholars in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.²¹ One decade after Cobo's feat, his Dominican brethren printed in the early years of the 17th century other books in Chinese for the *Parian* converts.²²

The Chinese *Doctrina Christiana* and the *Shih-Lu* advanced an answer to the charge to be made during the heated Rites controversy that the Philippine friars who entered China were ignorant of the Chinese

²⁰JUAN COBO, O.P., *Apologia de la Verdadera Religión*, Manila 1593. Ed. J. COBO-F VILLARROEL, O.P., *Pien Cheng-Chiao Chen-Ch'uan Shih-Lu*, Manila 1986, p. 60.

²¹See the facsimile edition by F. Villarroel, *Shih-Lu*, with introductory studies by the editor with A. Santamaría and A. Domínguez, and translations into Spanish and English, (see previous note).

²²P. VAN DER LOON, *The Manila Incunabula and early Hokkien Studies*, a reprint from *ASIA MAJOR, A British Journal of Far Eastern Studies*, London, new series, vol. XII, Part I, 1966.

language, people, customs and religions. This was not true of the Dominicans, who were conversant with both classic Chinese and the Hokkien dialect and appreciative of China's people and culture. And in their church of Binondo they educated the first Filipino saint, Lorenzo Ruiz, a Filipino-Chinese mestizo, martyr in Japan in 1637.

But unfortunately for the Philippine-based missionaries the continuous tension and sporadic violent encounters between the Chinese colonist and the Spanish colonial government made strong waves in China and increased there the ever-present suspicions latent in Mandarin quarters that the Spaniards in the neighbouring Islands had ominous designs over the Celestial Empire. Such fears were unfounded and the Dominican friars definitely condemned any idea of entering China by the force of arms.

It is true that the Spaniards, including their first Governor Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, proposed to Philip II the construction of an appropriate fleet for the exploration of the Chinese coasts. The temptation of a conquest came to their minds too, but it never went beyond a dream. Such ambitious ideas were cultivated by some ecclesiastics for a short time. But for the record, it was not a friar but a Jesuit, Alonso Sanchez, who was the most vocal exponent of the legality of employing military force in compelling China to open its gates to Christian evangelists. It is also known that by 1583 even the first Bishop of Manila, the Dominican Domingo Salazar, earlier a missionary in America and advocate of peaceful means, now began to share the opinion of Alonso Sánchez. His letter to Philip II has been quoted at length by George Dunne as evidence of the Bishop's military policy on China.

There was, however, a big difference between Salazar and Sanchez. The Bishop revoked his own opinion, Sanchez did not. In fairness to Salazar, what really counts for his true opinion is his final and unequivocal retraction. In 1590, soon after the arrival in Manila of the first band of Dominican missionaries, his confreres and former companions in America, who were staunch defenders of the principles of Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas, Salazar realized the futility of proposing an attack "on the greatest and best kingdom that exists in the world". And he retracted his former opinion "for the peace of my conscience and not to die with this scruple." For "one of the greatest offences that can be made to God and the biggest impediment and obstacle that can be made against the Gospel is to go to China with force of arms or any kind of violence, since, until now, there has been no cause, right or reason on our side, to enter in that kingdom with the aid of weapons. We should enter in the only way God wants, and when his Divine Majesty has designed."²³

²³DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 234; Letter of Salazar to Philip II, June 24, 1590, published in RETANA, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*, III, p. 40; JESUS GAYO, O.P., *Ideas teológico-jurídicas de los religiosos de Filipinas en el siglo XVI sobre la conquista de las Islas*, Manila 1950, pp. 169, 216-219.

For the Dominicans such "divine designs" would not be fulfilled until forty years later. By the time they founded their first mission, there were no more ecclesiastical prohibitions against their going to China. And although the opposition of the Portuguese *padroado* would continue to bar their entry from Macao, they found in the 1630's a most opportune door through Formosa, recently occupied by the Spaniards of the Philippines. In 1631 two of them were sent to China: Fathers Angelo Cocchi and Tommaso Serra, both Italians.

5. Rites and Divisions

The charge made against the Mendicant Orders that their arrival in China in the 1630's brought division among the missionary institutes and their Christians has received wide acceptance. But it has to be reviewed, since it not entirely correct. When the said missionaries established themselves in the province of Fokien they found in China an incipient Church divided since the death of Fr. Matteo Ricci; divided precisely over the adaptation of methods introduced by him.

Ricci's grandiose plan of converting China by himself becoming a Chinese with the Chinese in order to win the sympathy of the people, especially the literati class and the imperial family, was carefully planned and it looked splendid. His missionary techniques had several aspects or angles: Firstly, as said earlier, he looked and acted like a Chinese of the intellectual class, the literati, by dressing silk robes, having himself carried out on a sedan chair and being accompanied by a retinue of servants. The Chinese must have felt pleased, but some fellow-Jesuits openly criticized this behaviour; later the friars from the Philippines, particularly the Franciscans, would censure even more strongly this practice as anti-evangelical and far removed from the poverty counselled by the Gospel. Still this was only an accidental matter of external appearance, which, under the circumstances, might help to win converts. Other critics remarked that Christ came to evangelize the poor and live like them and with them. But surely the rich and the poor, the high and the low, are all called to the kingdom of heaven. And besides, some of the great moments of evangelization in the Middle Ages started with conversion of kings and tribal lords.

The second means of approach used by Ricci was through intellectual activity. The best efforts of his missionary life went in attracting the intelligentsia through the fascination with science. He put his vast knowledge of mathematics and cosmography to the service of the Chinese, using the scientific instruments he had brought from Europe as a bait to arouse the curiosity of the educated class and provoke questions and discussions with them. He visited them, elicited questions, observed the errors of their mathematical books. Again, not all the missionaries approved of the use of "human means" to introduce Christianity, but undoubtedly these means can be excellent aids to prepare the way for the goals of the Gospel.

Unfortunately, other accommodation devices became obstacles between Ricci and those goals. There were three questions that worried Ricci and demanded immediate solution. First, the so-called "term question;" second, certain rites universally observed by the Chinese in paying honor to their ancestors and to the sage Confucius; and third, a certain number of Christian practices that might cause displeasure to the Chinese.

The first question or problem was the finding of appropriate Chinese words to express Christian ideas, like grace, angel, soul, and particularly God, which could not be found in their vocabulary. There were two possible words for the expression of the Christian concept of God, namely, *Tien* (heaven) and *Shang-Ti* (ruler on high), and it was vitally urgent to decide on one for the translation of prayers and of the liturgy into Chinese. In the end, Ricci opted for the term *Tien-Chu*, which means "Lord of heaven," since the Chinese adored heaven and, therefore, *Tien-Chu* implied adoring someone greater than heaven. This solution was good (it is the term used today), but it did not satisfy some of his colleagues and successors in the mission.²⁴

The main problem Ricci had to handle was related to a number of rites and ceremonies performed by the Chinese in honor of their ancestors and to their revered master Confucius. "Dating back to the beginning of recorded history, these rites were the foundation of the social system of the Empire." They derived from the central concept of Confucian thought about harmony. Society is governed by harmonious relations between men, the most important being between parent and son, the relationship of *hsiao*, filial piety. This filial relation is so strong and sacred that it survives death, even though Confucius did not believe in God or in the immortality of the soul. The Chinese honor their dead, their *ancestors*, by offering to them meat, fruits, silk and perfumes; also they burn joss-sticks and paper-money before their corpses and graves. In their houses they keep a commemorative *tablet* (*peiwei*) with this inscription: "Throne or seat of the soul of N."

The ceremonies performed in honor of *Confucius* did not differ essentially from those made to the ancestors; but they were reserved to the *literati* class or Confucian scholars. And they were of two kinds: 1) Simple ceremonies performed on the graduation day of the *literati* students before a table representing the Sage; and 2) more solemn ceremonies held in the Spring and Autumn equinoxes, in which animals killed on the occasion were offered to him, together with wine, silk, candles; these in turn were followed by a solemn banquet.

This variety of ceremonies were often intermingled with other practices involving reverential and sacrificial-like rituals in honor of Buddha,

²⁴See Cummins, *Two missionary methods*, p. 45; DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-286. Surprisingly the Dominican Juan Cobo writing his *Shih-Lu* in Manila before 1593 (see above, note 20), already uses the term *Tien-Chu* to express God, in the lone occasion the term occurs (Cf. A. DOMINGUEZ, O.P., "El *Shih-Lu*: Observaciones filológicas" in COBO-VILLARROEL, *Pien Cheng-Chao*, p. 45.

which were widespread among the general run of the people. The literati and high classes also paid homage to a divinity called *Ching-Hoang*, protector of the fields and villages, to whom temples were dedicated. Mandarins and governors, upon taking possession of their office, had to go to the temple of *Ching-Hoang* and make obeissance to him, offering sacrifices to him.

The latter set of rites described above were rejected by all missionaries, since they were clearly defined as idolatrous and superstitious. Those of the first group in honor of the ancestor and of Confucius are more difficult to define from a theological point of view. In spite of their apparent religious character, Matteo Ricci came to conclude that they were not strictly religious, neither were they considered as such by the neo-Confucian school of his time, who did not believe in the survival of the human soul, including that of Confucius. Perhaps Ricci was never totally sure of the ground on which he was trodding, but putting to good use the much controverted theory of *Probabilism*, he declared that the ancestor rites were "certainly not idolatrous and *perhaps* not even superstitious" (Perhaps-probably).²⁵

Besides, after some study of Chinese classic literature, Ricci advanced the theory that, in former times, the religion of China had been monotheistic, and there were similarities between the ancient religious beliefs and Christianity. Nothing could be more pleasing to a Chinese sympathetic to Christianity. People could be told that their beliefs were not completely wrong after all, but only different. Perhaps their ancestors were not damned; perhaps their rites were compatible with the Christian faith.

Anyone can see that such theory was tempting and attractive. But it had its dangers, like the dispensations and *omissions* permitted by Ricci to his converts. Ricci produced a catechism in which he made no mention of six out the seven sacraments and he bypassed the five commandments of the Church. And, what was even more disturbing, he was careful not to display the crucifix too freely or to mention the doctrine of the Passion of Christ for fear that the Chinese could be scandalized at the idea of a crucified God.²⁶ Here we have an accommodation policy designed to go along the tastes of the Chinese. Would this policy not entail some dangers for the integrity of the Christian doctrine and practice? Would it not lead to syncretism, to an amorphous confusion of pagan and Christian beliefs? Did his fellow Jesuits think like him?

Many of them did, but not all, as the events following Ricci's death would show. Differences of opinion begun to surface among them, first about the style of life they had adopted. The Jesuits of Japan were the

²⁵D'ELIA, *Fonti Ricciane*, I, p. 118, quoted by DUNNE, *op. cit.*, P. 291.

²⁶See DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 270; CUMMINS, *Two missionary methods*, pp. 46-47. These rites and omissions were to be enunciated later with greater detail after the arrival of the Mendicants from the Philippines in 1631.

first to react unfavourably about the rites. Their Superior Father Valentin Carvalho, arriving in Macao in 1614, exiled from Japan, censured the methods of Matteo Ricci. Father Jean Valat forbade ancestor ceremonies to his converts. Father Ignacio Lobo said that when he first attended an ancestor ceremony he nearly fainted.²⁷ Other opponents included Father Luis da Gama and the famous Joao Rodrigues, nicknamed "The Interpreter."

But the staunchest opponent of the Riccian method of accommodation was undoubtedly Father Nicolo Longobardo, whose defection from his policies was the most sensitive of all because he was the man chosen by Ricci to succeed him. Convinced that the truth about the rites was hidden, and echoing the fears of his fellow-missionaries in Japan, Longobardo asked his Superior Provincial to conduct a thorough investigation into the Riccian methods, particularly the implications of the Term question. Consequently two scholarly Jesuits submitted a dissertation in favor of Ricci and two other Jesuits did the same against him. Longobardo himself wrote a lengthy study contradicting Ricci.

The situation became very embarrassing for the Society, since its members were divided at a moment when unity was needed.

In order to establish harmony among the missionaries, conferences were organized to settle their internal differences (no fewer than 74 meetings were held up to 1665, says historian Cummins), the most important of which was that convened at Kiatin in 1626, three years short of the arrival of the Philippine missionaries; however, nothing concrete was achieved in Kiatin because Longobardo remained adamant. The Jesuit Fr. Andre Palmeiro, Visitor of the Society, had some consolation at the fact that nothing leaked to the outside world and that the Christian Communities were not affected. For him the differences were more in the minds than in the hearts. In the end, unity of pastoral action was attained, but drastic measures and a severe discipline had to be imposed. "Any evidence of discussion was ordered to be destroyed, and the writings of the anti-Riccian group were burned. More than fifty controversial memoranda recorded as having been written up to the time of the mendicants' arrival in 1630's all have disappeared. The most important of these condemned memoranda was the one by Longobardo, destroyed in an *auto da fe*.²⁸

Outwardly, after Ricci's death, the winds blew favourably for the missions for several years, until a persecution was declared against the

²⁷Later on, Lobo was dismissed from the Society and he ended his days as a secular priest in Macao (CUMMINS, *Two missionary methods*, p. 59, note).

²⁸See DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-287.

²⁹See CUMMINS, *The travels and Controversies*, I, pp. XLIII-XLV; and *Two missionary methods*, pp. 59-60; also JOSE MARIA GONZALEZ, O.P., *Historia de las Misiones Dominicanas de China*, Vol. 1632-1700, Madrid, 1964, pp. 108-114, reproducing the Proemium of Longobardi's Treatise; and for a Jesuit version, see DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-286.

missionaries by Shen-Ch'ueh, who in 1615 was nominated Vice President of the Board of Rites and had nurtured a deep hatred against Christianity. He was a fervent neo-Confucian, jealous of the novelty of the religion of the West, whose moral doctrines and non-recognition of the spiritual authority of the Emperor he exploited to stir the Imperial Court against the missionaries. In 1617 an imperial edict forbid the practice of the Christian faith and decreed the expulsion of the Jesuits. Soon the persecution subsided, but it was rekindled four years later in Nanking when Shen-Ch'ueh, dismissed from office in 1620, was restored to grace in 1621. Many Christians suffered ill-treatment and incarceration.³⁰

The blame for the division among the missionaries can only be laid at their own door, but the persecution was the result of human resentment of some Chinese officials against Christianity, and the missionaries were the victims. For our purpose here, one thing should be underlined: That by the time the Dominicans established their first mission in China in 1631, a division had occurred because of the rites controversy; and that anti-Christian persecutions had taken place. Anti-Christian feelings would be frequent in that century, but not necessarily in relation to the Rites Controversy.

6. Civic or Religious? That was the Question

For Jesuits historian George Dunne, two ominous events which occurred in 1633 marked the end of the first scene, and the curtain raising of the second, in the splendid drama of the Christian mission of China founded by a generation of giants. The first event was the death of Hsu Kuang-Chi, Vice President of the powerful imperial Board of Rites, intimate friend of Ricci and protector of the Christian missions; and the second, the fateful arrival in mainland China of the friars from the Philippines.³¹

Actually the first Dominican arrived two years earlier, in 1631, and his Order was more wary about the reactions of the over-jealous and by-passed Portuguese *padroado* than about the doings of the successors of Ricci. In the last days of the previous year, using the Spanish backdoor of Formosa – a door that would be closed twelve years later – two Italian Dominicans of the Holy Rosary Province based in the Philippines left the Formosa northern point of Tamsui, carrying a diplomatic mission of friendship and commerce from the Governor of the Philippines to the Vice Roy of Fokien. They were Fr. Angelo Cocchi and Fr. Tommaso Serra. The choice of two Italians, not subject to the crowns of Spain or Portugal, was a well-considered move to obviate the wrath of the Macao authorities, and even that of the Portuguese missionaries in the field. Serra was killed at

³⁰Cf. DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-146; 159-160.

³¹DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-227.

high sea by the crew, while Cocchi managed to land almost miraculously. And although he failed in his diplomatic mission, he was able to remain in the country secretly in order to carry out missionary work.

If the island of Formosa offered an easy, though risky, access to China, the province of Fokien was considered by the Dominicans as their natural mission field, since practically all the Chinese traders of the *Parian* of Manila were Fokienese. After staying for six days in the capital city of Foochow, Cocchi moved to the northern town of Fogan, a place almost untouched by the preaching of the Gospel. Here he stayed for a little more than one year. He died in November, 1633, after having obtained the help of some brethren from Manila.

The reinforcements he had asked insistently for were few, slow to arrive and far between. In 1633, he welcomed Fr. Juan Bautista de Morales with a companion, the Franciscan Fr. Antonio Caballero de Santa Maria, both Spaniards. Both of them were destined to become towering figures for thirty years in the Rites Controversy. The Franciscan proceeded to Nanking in October of that year. One year later new recruits arrived in the persons of Fr. Francisco Díaz, O.P., and Francisco de la Madre de Dios, O.F.M., to be followed three years later by the Dominicans Juan Garcia and Pedro Chaves, and the Franciscans Onofre Pallega, Francisco Escalona, Domingo Urquicio and Gaspar Alenda.

Christianity had been introduced in Fokien quite recently, in 1625 by the Jesuit Fr. Giulio Aleni, one the greatest of the "generation of giants", admired by Jesuits and friars alike as "one of the most intelligent men in China today", "highly regarded by both Christian and heathen as a courteous, learned and able man, and a master of the Chinese language; he really was the oracle of the province in which he lived".³² He and his Jesuit brothers established residence in Foochow and, by this time, had carried the Gospel news through large areas of Fokien. However, they had never reached Fogan, and when Fr. Cocchi arrived he met only ten Christians who had been baptized by Fr. Aleni in Foochow, whereto the young men had gone to undergo some examination as students of Confucian literature.

At this point, to rectify certain misconceptions often expressed about the foundation of the Dominican mission in China, three considerations ought to be made: First, the Dominicans went there with a fairly good knowledge of the Chinese language, people, religion and culture. In particular Fr. Juan Bautista de Morales had been working for eight full years in the *Parian* and in Binondo of Manila. His contemporary Fr. Francisco Varo testified that "he knew perfectly the language of the *chincheos* [people of Amoy] who go to Manila." In China he succeeded in mastering

³²See excerpts from letters by the Jesuit Ignacio Lobo and by the Franciscan Antonio de Santa María in DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

the Mandarin, of which he wrote a grammar and a vocabulary. The Jesuit Fr. Arturo Gouvea was heard to remark that he had never seen a foreign missionary who possessed the Mandarin so well" as Father Morales. Of the 21 Dominicans who worked in Fogan since 1632, all, except two, were fluent in the Hokkien language, the Mandarin language and the peculiar dialect of Fogan.³³

Secondly, the first Dominicans (Cocchi, Morales and Diaz) entered China without any prejudice about missionary methods already used there. Fr. Morales said that "from the arrival of Father Angel [Cocchi] in this kingdom, more than two years elapsed without his or mine being aware of what was happening in China about the things to be mentioned later" (i.e., the rites permitted to the Christians).³⁴ In other words, they did not go to investigate the conduct of anyone, much less to antagonize or correct wrongdoings, but simply to preach the Gospel to the Chinese.

Thirdly, the Dominican pioneers lay no claim at adopting a prepared system of presentation of the Gospel. They started with the direct proclamation of the *kerygma*, the announcement of God's word, even if that word would sound strange and even unpleasant to their listeners. They had one that in the *Parian* of Manila with visible good response by the Chinese, as was shown by the satisfactory participation of the neophytes in the sacraments and in the feasts of the Church, and this only two years after the start of the *Parian* mission. If there was something striking the eyes of the people of Fogan at the behaviour of the missionaries it was two things: first, they had no preference for any social class; and second, they manifested a keen concern for the suffering people, e.g., the lepers and the abandoned. One day Fr. Morales met a wretched youth in a street of Fogan, whose legs and thighs were rotting and covered with purulent and fetid matter. He brought him home, cured his ulcers and treated him tenderly.³⁵

In Fogan and neighbouring towns, especially in Tingtao and Moyang, Morales and Díaz were surprised at the number of people ready to receive catechetical instruction and to learn all the duties of the Christian, even though the opposition of the authorities to their preaching was evident, for Fokien was one of the most xenophobic provinces of China. Fr. Francisco Díaz could write in 1635: "I am deeply pleased by the Christians

³³FRANCISCO VARO, O.P., *Manifiesto y declaración de la verdad de algunas cosas que dicen en dos tratados . . . los PP. Diego Fabro y Francisco Brancati* (1671), Ms. Archivo de la Provincia del Santo Rosario (APSR) (Avila), China, 58, ff. 88-150, quoted by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 394.

³⁴J.B. MORALES, O.P., *Historia Evangélica de China*, quoted by BARTOLOME MAR-RON, O.P., *Sentencia de los PP. Dominicos de la Provincia del Smo. Rosario de Filipinas acerca de los Ritos chinos*, 1693, Ms. APSR (Avila), China. Vol. 74, ff. 76; GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 86.

³⁵Incident reported by VITTORIO RICCIO, *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China*, 1667 (Ms.), quoted by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 86.

of this town. They pray long, practice mortification, fast many days, even on non-penitential days, and do other good things; and above all, they go to confession and confess so well, although they are still new Christians, that I could not believe it unless I saw it. They regard the sacraments as they should be regarded; and in their simplicity they ask me to make miracles. They esteem us very much and are edified by our treatment of them".³⁶

It was unfortunate that the first time the missionaries from the Philippines had a chance to meet a Jesuit Father in Fokien did not augur well for a fraternal understanding. Father Cocchi tells us how he had to go from Fogan to Foochow to settle some matter with a cheating letter-carrier from Manila. The six-day journey left him exhausted and he went to the residence of the Portuguese Father Bento Mattos, who received him courteously but refused to lodge him overnight alleging instructions from his Superiors. Cocchi had to look for accommodation in an inn. Back in Fogan, he wrote to Mattos in friendly and humble terms: "We, the three religious of St. Dominic and St. Francis, very much desire to accommodate ourselves with the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, because they have been in this kingdom for many years and have the experience of many things; and since we have arrived only recently, we are eager to be in the right course and to be uniform with you in the preaching of the Holy Gospel".³⁷

Accompanying this letter, Cocchi sent to Mattos the present of a bottle of Mass wine, for he had the impression that the Portuguese Jesuit was short of that commodity. But Mattos rudely returned the bottle, alleging that the wine was sweet and made him vomit. Still worse, in his answering letter to Cocchi he bluntly told him that the Dominicans had entered China like thieves. "No religious – he wrote – may administer the sacraments or preach in China without the license and blessing of our Father Vice-Provincial, who is the Vicar Forane [of the Diocese of Macao]. And so, Your Reverence must go to see him, because *he who does not enter by the door is a thief and a brigand*'. I have seen all the Papal Briefs, and in none of them is permission granted to missionaries to preach except by way of Portugal".³⁸ Mattos did not seem to be conversant with the Papal documents issued by Paul V (1608) and more recently by Urban VIII (1633) revoking the previous exclusivistic Bull of Gregory XIII (1585) and allowing all religious to go to China by any route.

In 1634 another unhappy experience happened to the Franciscan Antonio de Santa María, who had gone to Nanking at the suggestion of the Jesuit Visitor Fr. Manoel Dias to study Mandarin. It concerned his

³⁶ADUARTE, *Historia*, II, p. 495.

³⁷J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 69.

³⁸Text of Mattos' letter in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 69. Words in italics are from Joh. 10, 1: DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 238, says that in 1636 Mattos "did not remember any untoward incident", but he remembered some favours he later made to Frs. Cocchi and Morales. The latter point it possible; about not remembering the first, the above-quoted letter is a good reminder for him.

reception which he never forgot. "A committee of Catholic laymen seized him, bound his hands and feet, carried him aboard a ship, locked him in a cabin" and sent him back to Fokien. Commenting on this unpleasant welcome, Jesuit historian George Dunne says that "this is perhaps the only case on record of a priest being shanghaied by devout Catholics," and that if the Jesuits did not themselves hatched the kidnapping plot, they certainly sanctioned it . . . Some years later, Dias asked pardon to Antonio".³⁹

Incidents like these had to be contributing factors in creating a climate of indisposition between the old and the new missionaries. But so far they were only incidents between some individuals. More serious would be the first impressions and charges made mutually by both sides regarding methods and styles of preaching, once these became known. The Mendicants disliked the Jesuits' mandarin appearance, and the Jesuits accused the friars of imprudent street-preaching. Then came the more serious charge of the friars against the Jesuits: their allowing certain Chinese rites for their converts, the orthodoxy of which they doubted.

The Franciscans and Dominicans believed that the vow of poverty bound them in China as anywhere else in the world, and they should give testimony to Christ through their poverty. They shunned silk robes and avoided being carried about in sedan chairs. Silk robes were hardly compatible with religious poverty.⁴⁰ The Dominican Cocchi was once asked by his converts to don a dress in the style of their magnates. He refused, for he was "contented with poor habits, food and treatment, befitting one who went there to preach the crucified Christ to the poor and the humble".⁴¹ The friars found it hard to excuse the Jesuits' trading activities. They maintained that evangelization from the lower classes upward was not only more evangelical but also more fruitful. Yet – as Cummins correctly observes – neither the Orders nor the Jesuits ever limited themselves exclusively to any social class or group in China.

The Jesuits, for their part, had strong reservations about the friars' way of preaching which was so un-Chinese. They harshly criticized their imprudent and aggressive manner of presenting the Gospel, different from the Jesuit cautious and ceremonious suavity, more in accord with the refined Chinese etiquette. Actually, Jesuit fears of Chinese reactions to high-sounding street preaching were not without foundation. It was true that the friars, claiming to be heralds of the Gospel, behaved as

³⁹DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-241.

⁴⁰This scruple - comments J.S. Cummins - was not peculiar of the friars. Father Verbiest [one of the best scientist Jesuits in China] wore a hair shirt or iron chain beneath his robes 'and used to say it was shame for a Jesuit to be clothed in silks and in the livery of the world and not to wear the livery of Christ' (CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, p. XLVI.

⁴¹Words of Cocchi in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 60.

though they should put human respect aside and assertively and publicly present Christ as he lived and died, and not even the likelihood of persecution or even martyrdom deterred them. Between the year of their arrival and 1639 there were several cases of the friars risking their freedom and lives on account of their behaviour. In 1637, two Franciscans, Father Francisco de la Madre de Dios and Gaspar Alenda, went to the forbidden city of Peking in pursuit of a Confucian student thought by the Franciscans to have published an anti-Christian book. In the Capital, Francisco and Gaspar went to the public authorities dramatically holding crucifixes in their hands and, in the dialogue that ensued, they answered with theologically-loaded replies. They were manhandled and deported to Fokien under military escort.⁴²

In 1638 the military commander of the city of Foochow issued a decree proscribing Christianity and posted on the walls of some buildings posters which contained material insulting of the Christian religion. Two Dominicans, Fathers Morales and Chaves, and two Franciscans, hiding in far away Tingtao decided to protest against the calumnious material. They came out of their hideouts and walked forty leagues to the city, entering Foochow with crucifixes in their hands and preaching there from morning to night in defence of their religion.⁴³ In Fogan Fr. Francisco Díaz publicly tore down a blasphemous edict posted by a mandarin in the town square, and then he begun "to preach against what was written, and to defend the honor of God".⁴⁴ In the city of Wuchow, the Franciscan Francisco de Escalona ventured to place placards in public places of the city and begun preaching to the people wearing his Franciscan habit, holding a crucifix in his hands and proclaiming loudly".⁴⁵

Prophetic and dramatic proclamations like these would only offend the supporters of the Riccian method of approach. It must be said that the friars behaved in such manner only in exceptional circumstances. And not all of them felt the same way about street-preaching. For example, Fr. Díaz returning from exile to Fogan, had the valour – and imprudence – of standing again before a numerous audience and say: "I was the one who tore down the infamous placards full of blasphemies and lies against the law of Christ; and I was arrested, scourged and banished . . . Even if they

⁴²The Franciscans accused the Jesuits of Peking of conniving with the imperial authorities. The Jesuit Adam Schall wrote to exculpate the Jesuit and inculpate the Franciscans. See DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-255.

⁴³Both Dominicans and Franciscans reported this episode. See J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, pp. 136-138.

⁴⁴This is narrated by Díaz' companion Fr. Juan García in his *Relación de la vida y progresos del Venerable y devoto P. Fr. Francisco Dóaz*, quoted by J.M. González, *Historia*, I, pp. 140-141. In 1674 the Congregation of the Holy Office, in answer to a query submitted by Fr. Domingo Navarrete, said that the missionary should remove from the walls of the church placards placed by the magistrates if they were difamatory of the Christian faith (see J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 142).

⁴⁵See DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

killed me, I would do it again". But Fr. Juan García, on the contrary, is reported to have written to his Superiors in Manila lamenting such exaggerated shows of Christian zeal.⁴⁶ In any case, their behaviour was more defensive than offensive. They were not attacking the Chinese religion, Confucius, the Rites or the authorities for not accepting Christianity. They only defended their faith against insult and blasphemy.

But if the Riccians had a point in censuring the European forceful ways of proclaiming Christ's Gospel, the new missionaries felt dutybound to object to what they thought were adulterated forms of living the Christian faith. The Dominicans were in favour of adapting the Gospel to Chinese life, but the problem was how to combine both extremes.

In their first trips around the mission field of Fokien the Dominicans found several things that made them frown. First, the priests dispensed the converts from going to Holy Mass on Sundays and from Sunday rest; also they did not oblige the converts to confess and communicate once a year; secondly, they did not administer the unction to the dying women; and thirdly, without instructing the converts about the Christian ethics on profit and loans, they allowed them to charge interests higher than those allowed by the civil laws. More serious than all these things, the Dominicans observed that the veteran missionaries hid the crucifix from public view and refrained from mentioning the Passion and the death of Christ.⁴⁷ These findings were true, and the Riccians did not deny them, although they – in particular Fr. Francisco Furtado in a written answer to these charges – tried to attenuate their gravity or importance, considering the peculiar character of the Chinese people.

The above-mentioned omissions of the Church's positive laws or the hiding of the Crucifix were easy to detect upon first observation of the life of the Christians. A Franciscan priest remarked that "the Christianity of China was generally very cold." But it took two years for the friars to realize that the converts continued, after baptism, to practice some rites or ceremonies that were common all over China. It was a Franciscan, Fr. Antonio de Santa María, who accidentally came to know that the Christians were doing *chi* (sacrifices) in the temples, in the cemeteries and the private houses. The Dominican Morales began to inquire about this from as many Christians as he could. And one night, both missionaries went secretly to a pantheon of the family Meu-Son-Tong, where they were able to see, unobserved but at a close distance, the lengthy rites done there by Christians and non-Christians together. The reports received and these personal experiences disturbed them very deeply. The rites which Ricci had concluded to *certainly not idolatrous and probably not superstitious*

⁴⁶Regarding Díaz' preaching, see J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 171; for the statement of Fr. Juan García, see DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

⁴⁷These are the first of the twelve points written by Fr. Morales and presented to the Jesuit Visitor Fr. Manoel Dias in 1639 in Macao for discussion by both parties (Ms. APSR (Avila), China, t. 4, Relaciones, n. 2).

seemed to the friars to be *certainly superstitious and more than probably idolatrous*. Fr. Morales later on submitted to the Superior of the Jesuits a summary of some of those practices to be called the Chinese Rites. He said:

- That the Fathers and the Christians contributed funds for the celebration of pagan feasts to honor their idols;
- That the missionaries permitted to the (Christian) mandarins to go twice a month to the temple of the idol called Ching-Hoang and make external acts that looked like worship;
- That they allowed the mandarins (i.e. Christian) and the literati to go the temple of Confucius to make acts of reverence and adoration;
- That the Christians ate of the food offered to those idols;
- That the Christians were allowed to give cult to their ancestors with rituals and offerings of food, as long as they refrained from offering paper money or believe in the dead's presence or intercession;
- That the Fathers wore white dress (color of mourning in China) when they joined the pagan rites for the dead;
- That the Christians were allowed to keep in their houses certain tablets in which they believed the souls of the deceased dwell;
- That if asked about the final fate of Confucius, they answered with equivocations.⁴⁸

If these facts were true and their interpretation objective, there were strong reasons for any missionary to worry. Fr. Morales and his companion would not compromise in matters that had at least the appearance of superstition and idolatry. But they were ready to give the Jesuits the benefit of the doubt and to hear their side. And so, in November of 1635, Fathers Morales and Francisco de la Madre de Dios travelled forty leagues from Tingtao to Foochow to discuss these questions with the Vice Provincial of the Society of Jesus Fr. Francisco Furtado. Discuss they did, but unfortunately friars and Jesuit did not arrive at any satisfactory understanding.⁴⁹

⁴⁸This is the gist of the last nine points raised by Morales for the consideration of the Jesuit visitor (See previous note). - With reference to the use of white robes for the ceremony of the *tiao* (for expressing condolence), Fr. Francisco Varo, O.P., said that the great Jesuit sinologist Fr. Aleni, after serious study Chinese classics, decided to sell "the white silk dress he had" and "from then on he never went to them (*tiao* rites), neither did he allow his converts to attend them" (F. VARO, *Relación verídica y manifiesto*, cap. I, n. 9, quoted by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 160).

⁴⁹On this meeting, see J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 120.

Frustrated by this turn of events, all the friars, that is, the two Franciscans and two Dominicans who were in Fokien, took the bold step of conducting an informative inquiry in the canonical form (*Información Jurídica* or *Canonical Processus*) in order to present the case to their Superiors in Manila. And from December 22, 1635 to February 10, 1636, said friars constituted themselves into an ecclesiastical tribunal for the instruction of such processus. Fr. Juan Bautista Morales was nominated Judge of the first inquiry (December 22 to January 19), with the other three friars acting as officials, and summoning eleven Christians as witnesses. The second inquiry (January 20 to February 10) was presided over by Fr. Francisco de la Madre de Dios as Judge and the two Dominicans Morales and Diaz as witnesses.⁵⁰

Critics of the friars have belittled this Processus, considering it ill-advised because the officials of the tribunal were inexperienced, and the witnesses were but "a bunch of villagers"; and besides, the time given to the Inquiry was "cruelly" short, compared to the long and frequent meetings held by the Fathers of the Society along several decades.⁵¹ But we can give them also the benefit of the doubt. At the end of the first Inquiry Fr. Morales says that he was convinced that the idea came to them from above, "God suddenly putting this idea in their hearts", and he assures that the Inquiry was conducted "without passion, serenely, without trouble, wrath or hatred". They had no difficulty with the language, since at least Morales and Diaz knew Mandarin and the Hokkien and Fogan dialects. In fact Morales spoke the dialect even better than many of the veteran missionaries, and this was important in sounding and ascertaining the minds of the native Foganese. It is worth noting that some parts of the depositions of the first Inquiry are written in Chinese characters. And as for the quality of the witnesses they did not belong to the literati class, but they served the purpose of establishing the "common opinion of the people" who performed the rites, something the tribunal asked at every question.

The six questions of the first Processus covered the controverted matters regarding the ancestors cult, the honors paid to Confucius, the cult to the divinity Ching-Hoang, the tablets for the dead and the silence about the Crucified Christ. All things considered, says a modern historian, "the two historic processus could honor the best jurists of that time for the masterly planing of the questionnaire, for the clarity of the answers and for the general presentation of the subject, which seems the worked of periti".⁵²

⁵⁰The original text of the two *Informaciones* is in APSR (Avila), China, tomo 30, fols. 179-209, and fols. 210-234, respectively; the questions put to the witnesses are in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, pp. 122-124.

⁵¹DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-298.

⁵²J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 122.

The text of the Inquiry did not reach Manila until the middle of 1637. And by that time, a new anti-Christian persecution was raging in China, especially in Fokien. Fathers Morales and Diaz were banished to Macao, and during a sojourn of some years there, they did not spare any effort trying to thresh out matters with the Jesuit Superiors.

Meanwhile in Manila an unexpected event brought the controversy to a high-level confrontation between the religious Institutes, when the Spanish Jesuit Fr. Bartolome Roboredo, Procurator of the Jesuit Provinces of China and Japan, incensed by certain reports of the Dominican missionaries, felt duty bound to write a defense of the Riccian methods of adaptation. His apologia made public in 1638 was sensational, causing a veritable storm in ecclesiastical circles. Whether using his language intentionally or carelessly, most of the shots intended for the friars backfired. Roboredo wrote about Chinese "idols", "altars" and "sacrifices, and tried to justify the attendance at the rites by explaining that a cross was placed hidden behind the altar of the rites, to which cross the Christian worshipper could direct his devout aspirations and intentions. He also blamed the friars for the ongoing anti-Christian persecution because they did not allow to the pagans and converts the practice of their "idolatries".

Coming at such critical moment, the use of those terms was a grave mistake. The friars were bewildered. The Provincial of the Dominicans, Fr. Carlos Clemente Gant hastened to make a moving appeal and an ecumenical plea to the Jesuit Visitor in Macao. His letter, whatever other merits it may have, at least made the point of proving that the friars were willing to settle differences fraternally and without fanfare and were even ready to learn from the more experienced Jesuits in China. Gant's letter reads in part:

"It is extremely difficult to understand that our Christians may attend such manifestly idolatric sacrifices as he [Roboredo] confesses them to be . . . Do not be astonished, Your Reverence, that we take this with great difficulty . . . Our intention, Father Visitor, is to help such a great Institute as the Society of Jesus and to follow it in the ministry of China as far as possible.

And so, on behalf of my [Dominican] Province, I beseech Your Reverence to investigate this matter amicably, and we are ready to follow, once the steps are taken, whatever is agreed upon to follow, even if it were against our sentiments. So much do we desire peace.

As for the manner of conducting these investigations, Your Reverence will order as you please . . . What we want is that . . . discussing these things with clarity and desire for union . . . all Institutes become in agreement with the Society; and if there is something that should not be followed, it will not be followed. For since the Society has studied these things so well, everything will come out in its favour and there will be no schism or differences of doctrines in China.

Please think this over, Your Reverence, with great prudence and Christian sense, and realize that these matters demand solution. For it would not be good that big rumors about the Society would reach Europe, when the solution can be found here.

I hope to receive happy news, not only for me but also for the Angels of peace and for the Author of peace, a peace that will be celebrated in heaven if we can attain it here on earth.- Manila, March 5, 1639.- Carlos Clemente Gant, O.P.⁵³

Regrettably enough, nothing positive came from this conciliatory and moving appeal by the highest authority of the Philippine Dominicans. We know that the letter was transmitted to the Jesuit Superior in Macao, Fr. Manoel Dias, carried by Fr. Juan Bautista de Morales. Accompanying the letter, Morales took the liberty of submitting a list of twelve points summarizing the controverted questions. Dias answered vaguely that Fr. Roboredo should answer for his writings, and the study of the twelve points would be entrusted to the Vice-Provincial Fr. Francisco Furtado who was then in Northern China on a canonical visitation.⁵⁴

Someone has said that "the friars from the Philippines were little disposed to learn from Jesuit mistakes."⁵⁵ Gant's letter is a good answer to this charge. Another charge made is that Fr. Morales showed little patience in waiting for an answer to the twelve points he had presented. But there are reasons to doubt that an early answer would come at all. The visitor Fr. Manoel Dias, after having been deprived of his office by the professed Jesuits of the Macao College, died on November 28 of that year 1639, and there was no way of knowing whether Furtado would comply promptly with the commission given to him by the late Visitor. Fr. Morales did wait for some time, but considering that the Rites question was a matter of such transcendental importance, the Dominican Superiors of Manila, despairing about the possibility of dialogue, decided to send Fr. Morales to Rome.

The problem of the Chinese Rites, as an Augustinian missionary would put it many years later, became "as delicate as glass; once you break the glass you cannot join the pieces again."⁵⁶ Both sides, liberals and their opponents, picked up their corresponding pieces and went their way separately. And from that moment, the main action of the sad drama would take place mostly in Rome and Europe.

⁵³Letter of Fr. Carlos Clemente Gant, O.P., to Fr. Manoel Dias, S.J., Visitor of the Province of China, Manila, March 5, 1639 Ms. APSR (Avila), China, t. 4, Relaciones.

⁵⁴Letter of Morales to Dias, Macao, June 3, 1639; and Letter of Dias to Morales, Macao, June 4, 1639 (Ms. (Avila), China, t. 4, Relaciones).

⁵⁵DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233.

⁵⁶Quoted by J. METZLER, "Alvaro de Benavente, OSA, en los documentos del Archivo Secreto Vaticano", in *Agustinos en América y Filipinas*, Valladolid, 1990, p. 871.

In China, as the decade of the 1640's started, the Manchu dynasty would take over the government of China, and the Jesuits would enjoy the confidence of its first rulers. But the change of dynasty witnessed also a violent anti-Christian persecution in the province of Fokien, and in 1648 the Dominicans had their first martyr – the Protomartyr of China – Blessed Francisco de Capillas, the only 17th – century martyr of China beatified by the Church. Let it be stressed, however, that neither the Manchu persecution nor the martyrdom of Fr. Capillas was related to the Dominican stand in the controversy over the Chinese Rites.

7. The Appeal of Rome

The presence of Fr. Morales in the Eternal City brought the affairs of the Chinese rites to the attention of the central Curias of the religious Institutes involved and eventually of the Roman Curia. Whether for better or for worse, and to be strictly historical, Morales was not the first to start the chain of appeals and counter-appeals that followed one another in rapid succession before the highest tribunals of the Church. He was preceded by the Jesuit Fr. Alvaro Semedo, whom his Superiors in the Far East had sent to Rome two years earlier to report on the state of the mission.⁵⁷ The Jesuit Central Curia advised him against presenting the problem to the Holy See.

Fr. Morales left Manila in May 1640 accompanied by the Franciscan Antonio Caballero de Santa Maria. After five months of forced waiting in Macao, he started alone for Rome in an adventurous and perillous journey across the Indian ocean and subcontinent, Mesopotamia, the Middle East, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea, arriving in Rome on February 24, 1643. The trip lasted for three eventful years. He was received in audience by Pope Urban VIII, who instructed the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (today Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) to study the report he had presented about China, which in turn assigned the work of examination to a Commission of six Consultors under the presidency of Cardinal Ginetti, with Msgr. Ingoli as Secretary.

Morales submitted 17 propositions regarding the main controverted questions on the administration of sacraments, usury, the pagan rites permitted to the Christian mandarins and literati, the cult of ancestors, the keeping of the tablets honoring the dead, Christian terminology, certain honorific symbols in honor of the Emperor displayed in the churches, the showing of the cross and the preaching about the Passion. Needless to say, the phrasing of the propositions obviously implied that the proponent thought the rites to be, not civic, but religious in nature and intention.

⁵⁷Cf. FRANCISCO VARO, O.P., *Relación Verdica y Manifiesto de la verdad*, cap. I, n. 11. According to DOMINGO Navarrete, *Controversias*, trat. 8, n. 9, Semedo later published in Madrid his *Imperio Sínico*, where he followed the opinion of the Dominicans. Both sources are quoted by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 163.

The sessions of the Commission dragged on for one year, due to various reasons, especially to pressures from outside, as a result of which the President of the Commission was changed and, "pro bono pacis" and in consideration of the Riccian side, a seventh Consultor was appointed, a Jesuit, who followed the proceedings from then on. When Father Morales knew about it, he paid a courtesy call to the new Consultor and told him: "In Rome I am not seeking anything against the Society; I am only asking His Holiness to tell us what we, religious, must follow and practice in China uniformly, in order to avoid the scandals that our contradictory opinions are causing among the Christians."⁵⁸

Of all the Resolutions arrived at by the Commission, three are drafted in such cautious terms as to allow the possibility of interpreting the rites as civic ceremonies (on the tablets for the dead, on the word *Xing* (holy) and on the symbolic altars to honor the Emperor). All other Chinese rites are censured as presented by Fr. Morales. And once the work of the Holy Office was over, the Resolutions were passed on to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, which gave its approval and to Pope Innocent X, who, on September 12, 1645 issued a Decree enjoining all missionaries in China ("including those of the Society of Jesus") to observe the Resolutions under severe ecclesiastical penalties.⁵⁹

Father Morales returned to Manila in 1648 carrying a letter of Msgr. Ingoli, Secretary of the Commission of the Holy Office, for the Archbishop of Manila, ordering him to promulgate and implement the Roman decisions contained in the accompanying Resolutions, enjoined by the Decree of Innocent X, also enclosed. Whether a similar task was given to the Bishop of Macao is not known to this writer. At any rate, the Dean of the Cathedral Chapter of the Archdiocese of Manila (*sede vacante*) proceeded to conduct an *Información Jurídica* (1648-1649) in conformity with the Roman instructions, substantially following the questionnaire of the famous *Información Jurídica* held in Tingtiao in 1635, with a notable addition, which became question 9: Whether Fr. Adam [Schall, S.J.] has been and is the Astrologer of the Court of Peking, enjoying the title of Grand Mandarin; and whether he has printed a book on astrology in Chinese characters, which is circulating throughout China (*New Rules or Repertoire of the Calendar, according to the astrology of Europe, composed by the Master John Adam, astrologer of the Emperor*), in which many superstitions are taught".⁶⁰ There was some reason for asking this question, because Fr. Adam was actually holding that imperial post, and his calendar had just come under severe scrutiny and censorship by the Jesuits

⁵⁸The original text of this report of Fr. Morales is in APSR, China, t. 74, ff. 100-102 and t. 275, ff. 15-18.

⁵⁹The text of the Papal Decree is in *Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide* (Roma 1897), pp. 653-655.

⁶⁰The proceedings of the *Información Jurídica* are in APSR, China, t. 74, ff. 325-374; the questionnaire can be read in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, pp. 275-276.

missionaries themselves, by the Roman College (of the Society) and by the Congregation of the Holy Office.⁶¹

His mission fulfilled in Manila, Morales proceeded to Macao, where he handed to Fr. Manoel Dias ("Junior"), Vice Provincial of the Jesuit Province of China, a letter from the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide with the accompanying Roman Resolutions and the Decree of Innocent X. Acknowledging the letter and documents, Fr. Dias courteously assured Morales that "the Fathers of the Society are true sons (*muy hijos*) of the Apostolic See and they are under orders of His Holiness; and he would issue instructions towards the implementation of the Roman decisions in whatever was possible."⁶²

But it seems that there were considerations that rendered the implementation of the decisions impossible or at least inopportune. The permissionists became convinced that the Roman decisions were based on misrepresentation of facts, and so they had the right to present their side. Of course, they had such right. And so, ten years later, the Society dispatched to Rome one of their ablest men, Fr. Martin Martinez, who submitted to the Congregation of the Holy Office a statement of *dubia* about the Chinese rites, the phrasing of which implied that they were considered purely civil ceremonies. The outcome of this consultation was that Pope Alexander VII issued a Decree on March 23, 1656 permitting the rites as presented by the proponent.⁶³

The new Decree created no small confusion in the minds of the missionaries, baffled by the apparent contradiction between two papal documents, namely that of 1645 and this one of 1656. Actually, as far as the Holy See was concerned, the contradiction was more apparent than real, for each Pope had answered the questions as *presented*. It was in the interpretation of facts that the big difference lay. And now it was the friars' side that was dismayed at what they considered a decision based on misrepresentation of facts. Firmly convinced about the righteousness of their cause, they sent to Rome Fr. Juan Polanco, a Dominican, who brought more questions and presented them in more detailed form to the Holy Office. This happened in the year 1669. But the Pope, Clement IX, died that year, and no papal decree was issued on those propositions, though it known that they were faovurably judged by the consultora of the Holy Office.⁶⁴

⁶¹For Jesuit reservations about Adam Schall, see DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-336, and regarding the Holy Office, see J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 275.

⁶²See Morales' narrative in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 286.

⁶³The Papal Brief is in *Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Roma 1897, pp. 655 ff.

⁶⁴Polanco's questions and the reply of the Consultors of the Holy Office are in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, pp. 403-408.

Who was right here? And who was the better interpreter of the facts? Morales and Polanco one side, or Martín Martínez on the other? And which of the two Papal documents should be enforced and followed? That was the question. As far as the Dominicans were concerned, they could forward several considerations: For one thing, Rome clearly stated in 1669 that the previous decree of Innocent X in 1645 was not superseded by that of Alexander VII eleven years later; for another, that the Secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, commenting on the decrees, stressed that "the Decree of 1645 was perceptive with penalties, while that of 1656 was of simple tolerance"; thirdly, the proceedings of the Holy Office that examined the questions presented by Fr. Morales in 1645 were not done *surreptitiously* as some opponents later claimed, since the Commission went to extent of appointing an additional Jesuit consultor, a privilege the Dominicans were not given when the questions of Martínez were examined in 1656; and finally, the Decree of 1645 was publicized openly and widely, while that of 1656 was kept from the knowledge of many missionaries, including some of the Riccian side.

8. Adam Schall, Canton and Domingo Navarrete

It is outside of the scope of this study to follow the tragic events brought by the anti-Christian persecution unleashed in China in the year 1665. Our only interest and purpose is to focus on the causes of that persecution and its subsequent history. Anyone would have expected the Chinese to persecute the missionaries for questioning their ancestral and sacred rites. But strangely enough, this time the storm of the persecution was centered around a man who devoted his life to implement one of the accommodation policies dearest to Fr. Matteo Ricci's heart, the advancement of science for the Chinese.

In the last years of the Ming dynasty, the Jesuit missionaries had made significant conversions to Christianity in the capital. Even some members of the Imperial family are reported to have been baptized. But the Ming were overthrown in 1644 by the Manchu dynasty, and notwithstanding the enmity of the new rulers against the old, a Jesuit priest somehow managed to win the favour of the new masters and of their first Emperor, Shun-Chi. This missionary was Fr. John Adam Schall von Bell. He was Ricci's successor in the work of inducing the friendship and conversion of the Chinese through the means of science. Having won the full confidence of the Emperor, Adam Schall was appointed President of the highest bureau, the Bureau of Astronomical Observation and Mathematics, which was in charge of elaborating the all important yearly Calendar. This was one of the most coveted posts in the mandarin hierarchy. In addition, other titles were conferred on him, like "Master of the Universal Mysteries" and "President of the Imperial Chancery."

But if these honors were highly regarded and honest in themselves, the risks they entailed were also great, for the Astronomy Bureau and

the confection of the Calendar, filled with superstitions, carried obligations that were not proper to a Catholic missionary. For his dubiously orthodox activities, Schall was openly criticized by many of his Jesuit brothers, who even brought his case to Rome. Yet Schall was defended by his highest Superiors in the Society. Emperor Shun-Chi became his friend and admirer, and for some time he seemed to be interested in Christianity. But in 1660 Shun-Chi died and the star that shone over Schall suddenly vanished.

Soon a wave of human passions was unleashed against the Peking Jesuits. The ministers of rival bureaus, especially the Bureau of Rites, the Buddhist and Moslem courtiers and the Regents who governed the Empire for the Child Emperor, all conspired against the influential Schall, accusing him of having caused the death of Shun-Chi, of spying for Macao, of committing errors in the confection of the calendar, of preaching a false religion and of promoting a Christian plot against the State. In 1664 the first Regent ordered the imprisonment of four Peking Jesuits, namely Fathers Schall, Ferdinand Verbiest, Gabriel Magalhaes and Ludovico Buglio. By a Government decree Christianity was forbidden, its properties confiscated and all missionaries were ordered to be banished from China. Consequently, after several court trials in Peking, a number of missionaries, Jesuits, Dominicans and the lone Franciscan Fr. Antonio de Santa María, suffered cruel imprisonment together (the Dominican Domingo Coronado died in jail) and finally were condemned to be deported. The banished missionaries of the three Institutes arrived in Canton in April 1665. There they remained.

Separated from their mission posts and from their flock, the Dominicans could only find consolation at the thought that they had not been the cause or excuse for the persecution, and that their opposition to the Chinese rites had nothing to do with the tragic situation. They could not but blame Adam Schall, not precisely his person, but the office he held, which had aroused so much jealousy, envy and resentment in the Imperial circles. It seemed to the opponents of the rites that Ricci's accommodation policy through science had, it not failed, at least backfired in those particular circumstances. Was it not a bit far-fetched for Fr. Schall to have build twenty canon for the wars of the Ming armies against the Manchues? And was is not a little too bold for a Christian missionary to engage in confecting and publishing an official calendar, important indeed for the Chinese, but plagued with superstitious beliefs? Outspoken, irascible and ironic, frequently at odds with some of his brother-Jesuits, poor Schall was now blamed by all for the miserable situation to which Christianity in China had been reduced.⁶⁵ Gregorio Lo, the first Chinese to be

⁶⁵The Dominican Fernández Navarrete neve doubted that Adam Schall's activities were totally responsible for the persecution that befell on all missionaries. Many others felt the same way. Hence came the pun "One Adam having driven us out of Paradise, another has driven us out of China"; and the parody on St. Paul's words: "We have all sinned in Adam"; or as Father Navarrete overhead one Jesuit tell another; "Father Ricci got us into China with

ordained priest, the first to enter the Dominican Order and the first Chinese Bishop, disapproved of missionaries of any Order "acting as ambassadors or doing other secular tasks, because I know from experience that most of these activities only conduce to grave damage for the missionaries and to discredit the holy Law of the Lord."⁶⁶

The internment in Canton lasted for almost six years (1665-1671), during which an atmosphere of fraternal understanding prevailed among the internees of the three Institutes: nineteen Jesuits, three Dominicans and one Franciscan, the redoubtable Antonio de Santa Maria. By now almost the entire first "generation of giants", companions and successors of Ricci had disappeared from the mission field. The Dominicans had lost Juan Bautista de Morales (+1664), although he had been replaced by other extraordinary missionaries, notably Fathers Francisco Varo, Vittorio Ricci or Riccio (Matteo Ricci's relative) and Domingo Fernandez Navarrete. Five Dominicans had managed to remain in Fokien. The three interned in Canton were Fathers Domingo Navarrete (Superior), Domingo Sarpetri and Felipe Leonardo.

News that the young Emperor, K'ang-Hsi, had dismissed the Regency Council in August 1667 made the internees hope that they might soon return to their respective mission posts. Thereupon, they decided to organize a formal conference among themselves in order to discuss the different aspects and problems of their apostolate so as to act uniformly in the future throughout China. And though the final resolutions were to be taken by vote (there were 20 Jesuits and only four friars), Navarrete and his companions agreed to join in the discussions for the sake of peace, although not without some reservations and fears. They had reason to be apprehensive. Some forty propositions had been discussed and passed by the assembly, when, just before closing and to the astonishment of the friars, one of their number, the Sicilian Dominican Domingo Sarpetri, abruptly and unexpectedly brought up for discussion the explosive topic of the Chinese Rites. The motion to discuss them was seconded, and the subsequent proposition carried by a majority of votes was that "all missionaries should follow the answers of the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition, approved by our Holy Father Alexander VII in

his mathematics, and Fr. Adam got us out with his" (CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, p. LXXVII). Let it be said, however, that the Dominicans had their version of Adam in the famous Fr. Vittorio Riccio, who found himself involved in risky diplomatic maneuvers between the powerful pirate Chen-Ch'eng-Kung (Coxinga) and the Philippine colonial government. And so with other missionaries. "Father Riccio - says J.E. Wills, Jr. - was by no means the only missionary who found himself performing dangerous and distasteful secular tasks for a pagan prince. Others lived lives as hazardous in places as strange. Think, for example, of Buglio and Magalhaes . . . Verbiest and Pereira [Jesuits], abbe Hue in Mangolia ("The hazardous missions of a Dominican: Vittorio Riccio, O.P., in Amoy, Taiwan and Manila", in *Les Rapports entre la Chine e l'Europe au temps des Lumières*, Paris 1980, p. 256.

⁶⁶Letter of Bishop Lo to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Nanking, November 7, 1688, quoted by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 410. See also the previous note on the diplomatic missions of Riccio and others.

1656, for they are based on solidly *probable* opinion". And such probability existing, the doors of salvation should not be closed to the Chinese by forbidding them what they do in good faith.

A question arises at this juncture viz., was not Sarpetri's defection a counterpart of the defection of the Jesuit Nocolo Longobardo from the Riccian lines several decades earlier? Somebody thought of that, but Navarrete explained Sarpetri's case away by remarking that the latter had been influenced by his uncle, the Jesuit Fr. Brancati, who was residing in the house of the interneers. Navarrete further commented that Sarpetri's was, after all, the only defection the Dominican ranks had through the entire Rites Controversy's history. As expected, neither Navarrete nor the Franciscan Santa María subscribed to the above stated proposition. They argued, in the first place, that the presentation of the questions to the Holy See by Fr. Martínez in 1656 had been done superstitiously. This was followed by long months of heavy intellectual activity. Navarrete presented his views on the nature of the rites to the Jesuit Visitor in Macao, Fr. Luis da Gama, and Gama, for his part, entrusted their study and answers to two outstanding Jesuits: Fr. Jaques de Lefevre, the Society's best theologian, and Fr. Francisco Brancati, its best sinologist, "presumably the most formidable team in China the Jesuits could field."

The controversy turned now eminently theological about the licitness to follow in conscience course of action which seems contrary to divine or Christian law. Actually the discussions looked like the theological disputes going on in Europe in those years about the various systems of morality to help the conscience of man follow a line of action, when doubt arises and there are several opinions on it. When a law becomes confused in its application, opposite but worthy opinions may arise about the obligation to follow the law or about the licitness to act freely and independently of that law. One opinion may favor the law, another may be more inclined for the exemption from the law. *Probabilism* held that, in that case, it is licit to follow an opinion favoring the *freedom* from the law even if that opinion is *less probable* than the one favoring *the law*, as long as the opinion is solidly *probable*. On the other hand, *Probabiliorism* maintained that the law must always be followed unless the opinion favoring the freedom from the law is *more probable*, mere *probability not being enough*.

In the 17th-century European disputes, the moral system of *Probabilism* was maintained by the majority of the members of the Society of Jesus, while *Probabiliorism* was upheld by almost all the Dominican theologians. It is outside of our scope to elaborate further on those disputes. But it worth nothing that during the one hundred years that the Rites Controversy lasted, most of the Popes encouraged Probabiliorism over Probabilism, and in several instances going to the extent of condemning propositions of certain probabilist authors. Conspicuous among those Popes were Alexander VII (1655-1667), Innocent XI (1676-1689), Benedict XIII (1724-1730) and Benedict XIV (1740-1758).

In China the positions were clear. Fr. Adam Schall conceded in 1650 that the friars' view on the rites was *more probable* and *safer*, although the Jesuits' stand did not talk *probability*, and therefore it could be followed. The same opinion was expressed by Fr. Brancati when he said that the Jesuits' position was "within the limits of a *probable* opinion." But taking into account the line clearly adopted by the Holy See on these systems, someone has said that the Riccians seemed to be "skating on theological thin ice."⁶⁷ As a matter of fact, in 1680, ten years after the Canton conference, the Congregation of the Holy Office, upon instructions of Pope Innocent XI, published a Decree enjoining the Superior General of the Society of Jesus "to write in favour of the *more probable* opinion and to oppose the sentence of those maintaining that . . . it is licit to follow the *less probable*."⁶⁸

All attempts at arriving to an understanding failed. The Franciscan Antonio Caballero de Santa María died during the internment in Canton, begging the Fathers "for the love of God, not to use those tablets [for the dead] at his burial." Yet someone placed the tablets near his bier, which caused great distress to Navarrete, but he "kept silence." More than ever before, Navarrete understood that the problems of the rites could not be settled in China, but had to be decided in Rome by Papal declaration. And since the Jesuits sent a Canton internee, Fr. Prospero Intorcetta, to Rome in 1670 to present their views before the Holy See, Navarrete made a similar decision and took the path to Rome to present the Dominican viewpoint.

Navarrete left Canton secretly, just as Intorcetta had done, starting on May 11, 1670 a long sea voyage by the way of the cape of Good Hope. The adventurous trip – minutely described in Book VI of his *Tratados*, and soon to be translated into English for its extraordinary human interest and scientific value – lasted for three years, arriving in Rome in January 1673. About Father Intorcetta we know that he "failed to make an impact on the Society's Curia, a failure over which he brooded for years" according to his fellow-Jesuit Fr. Ferdinand Verbiest.⁶⁹ Navarrete submitted to the Holy Office no less than 119 propositions on a variety of topics, ranging from the duties of Christian mandarins to the cult of Confucius, the sacraments, veneration of the ancestors, fasting and evangelization of China in general. They were "approved and confirmed" on April 22, 1674, by two Cardinals and two consultors of the Holy

⁶⁷CUMMINS, *Two missionary methods*, p. 100.

⁶⁸The text of the Decree is in DENZINGER-SCHONMETZER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum definitionum et declarationum*, Herder, 1976 n. 1219; and for a compendious exposition of the various systems of morality on the matter of conscience, see ANTONIO ROYO MARIN, O.P., *Teología Moral para seglares*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid 1964, pp. 148-158. For the merits of Probabilism see, for instance, ANTONIO MA. ARREGUI-MARCELINO ZALBA, S.J., *Compendio de Teología Moral*, Bilbao 1951, pp. 29-33.

⁶⁹Quoted by CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, II, p. 373.

Office, which – he says – “left me at ease and satisfied me”.⁷⁰ And then he left for Madrid to take over the post of Procurator General of the Dominican Province of the Rosary of the Philippines. He stayed in Madrid for two years and a half (1675-1677).

His sojourn in the Spanish capital proved to be one of the most eventful periods of his life, for it was then and there that he wrote and printed the works that would bring him fame, praise and criticism. These are the *Tratados históricos, políticos, éticos y religiosos de la Monarquía de China* (Madrid, 1976); and the *Controversias antiguas y modernas de la misión de la Gran China* (partially printed). The impact of the *Tratados* on friends and foes alike was extraordinary. “By publishing the *Tratados* - says J.S. Cummins - Navarrete shifted the center of action, turning a local dispute into a universal controversy; for until then the mortal struggle was scarcely known in Europe”. “Until its publication, the Jesuits of the 17th century had been the only authoritative writers on China; Navarrete’s account, the work of one who had been there for years, was the first to break this cultural monopoly. It was also to be the last important work on China written while the East was still within the Iberian sphere of influence, for a few years later, the French, both Jesuits and the Vicars Apostolic of Propaganda Fide, took control of the mission”.⁷¹ And noting the Jesuits penchant for writing and the Dominican indifference to publish their achievements, sinologist Charles Boxer has remarked that “there is nothing in Dominican literature faintly comparable with the informative Jesuit Letters . . . except a few works like the racy *Tratados* of Fernández Navarrete.”⁷²

In Both the *Tratados* and the *Controversias*, Navarrete shows a vast knowledge of the history, government, traditions, character and literature of China. And he substantiates his thorough exposition of the rites with a valuable collection of first-hand documents covering the various phases of the disputes: The Riccian methods, the disputes both among the Jesuits and with the friars, the appeals to Rome, unknown episodes during the Canton internment and papers written by both sides to defend their respective opinions.

For Navarrete the gist of the problem lay in the question whether the Rites were purely civil ceremonies – and therefore compatible with the Christian faith – or religious in nature, that is, idolatrous or at least superstitious – and therefore inadmissible in Christian religious living. Studying the ancient Chinese classical texts, Ricci, as we have indicated

⁷⁰The 119 propositions were published in Navarrete’s *Tratados Históricos* (Madrid 1676), pp. 483-514. See J.M. GONZALEZ *Historia*, I, pp. 480-482; and CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, II, pp. 370-374.

⁷¹CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, pp. L and CIV.

⁷²CHARLES BOXER, *Fidalgos in the Far East, 1550-1770*, The Hague 1948, quoted by CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, p. LXXXVIII.

earlier, was inclined to conclude that the primitive religion of China must have been monotheistic, thus allowing the possibility for establishing similarities between Christianity and those ancient beliefs; he maintained further that the Rites were originally *civic*, as the original Confucian texts seemed to imply; but in the course of time, they became infected with erroneous preternatural and superstitious beliefs. Those superstitions, however, were now in the process of being abandoned or laicized. But Ricci could not explain why those ceremonies had been given a liturgical character strongly suggestive of religious beliefs; why China was rife with superstitions (a fact Ricci could not deny); and why, while the literati took the rites for mere expressions of civil honors and courtesies, a great number of people devoutly subscribed to those ceremonies as forms of worship. The Riccians could only hope that the process of laicization would go fast, so that the Christians could practice them with peaceful conscience as civic ceremonies.⁷³

But Navarrete, in assessing the real implications of the Chinese religious thought, paid less attention to the ancient classics than to the contemporary Confucian commentators, especially those of the neo-Confucian school of Chu-Shi (1130-1200), who were the dominant intellectual class of the 17th century. It was the living generation Navarrete and all missionaries were called to evangelize, not the ancient past. As he put it, "the past is gone, it is the present generation that concerns us". And in that generation Navarrete distinguished between two classes of Chinese: the literati and the rest. The literati pretended to believe in the popular religion, but in fact they were atheists blinded by intellectual pride. The ignorant masses, even though they were using the same language, gave the rites a religious meaning. The literati seemed to be talking of "offerings" made upon "tables" in civic "halls," while the ordinary people were referring to "sacrifices," made upon "altars" in pagan "temples." Ricci cast the lot with the literati, while Navarrete and companions listened to the common people and realized that they were talking about religion and, at the same time, were more receptive to the Gospel.

Navarrete believed it was dangerous to present Christianity as a revival of the primitive religion of China; that it was conceited to imagine that "although the mystery of the Blessed Trinity cannot be positively found in the Old Testament, some people have it that it was revealed to the ancient Chinese."⁷⁴ The Chinese – Navarrete said – were intelligent enough to understand that adjustments were needed in order to accept Christianity whole and entire. Some people accused him of suppressing political and civil ceremonies "established by this nation for a thousand years." That accusation hurt him deeply. "We always were of the

⁷³For further elaboration see DUNNE, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-297.

⁷⁴For more study on Navarrete's thought, see CUMMINIS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, pp. LXIV-LXVIII.

opinion," – he retorted – "that the political and civic practices must be, not only permitted, but positively appreciated if they are good and reasonable, without detriment to the Law of God". Unquestionably he was in favor of accommodation as far as it was possible.⁷⁵

Navarrete's *Tratados*, compact, cultured and enlightening in its content, is not devoided of salty, satirical and sarcastic tirades and innuendoes, as books of controversy usually are not. Its publication made sensational news not only in Spain but also throughout Europe where the Society of Jesus was then under heavy fire by the Jansenists and the advance-guard of Enlightenment. The *Tratados* had great diffusion and was translated into several languages, drawing different reactions from the opposite sides of the fence. In Spain, Fr. Cortes Osorio, S.J., was entrusted by the Society of Jesus to write an appropriated answer. And when the *Tratados* reached China at a later time, the Jesuit missionaries reacted strongly, particularly Fr. Ferdinand Verbiest, who wrote a forceful rebuttal more to the point than the passionate and mediocre response of Osorio who had never been in China.

Representations were made to have the *Tratados* banned by the Spanish Inquisition, but they failed. It was strongly argued that Navarrete's work aided the cause of the Jansenists, that it "delighted the sworn enemies of the Jesuits in Europe." They actually took advantage of the book, but Navarrete answered that his only concern was China, and that he could not be held responsible for the bad use other people made of his books. It was also alleged that the *Tratados* was politically subversive in Spain. The Chinese – the Inquisitor were told – are materialistic and, by reading Navarrete, ignorant Spanish readers will learn that China is "the most excellent nation in the world by the justice of its government, the reasonable nature of its laws, the propriety of its customs, the modernity of its armies and the upbringing of its youth." It seems strange that a Spanish missionary could offer such praises of a pagan nation to the subjects of His Catholic Majesty, but it was stranger still that a brother of Matteo Ricci could censor a book containing praises worthy of Ricci's pen. But that was the incredible situation to which the bitter controversy had led the contending parties.

Neither the *Tratados* nor the *Controversias* were banned by the Spanish Inquisition, whose consultors agreed that they were works that could help the evangelization of the Orient, and therefore they were apt for publication. The *Controversias*, however, was not printed beyond page 670 and mysteriously remained unpublished, it being "impossible to decide – says Cummins – whether Jesuit energy or Spanish lethargy" prevented the publication of the book.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Cf. CUMMINS, *Two missionary methods*, p. 87.

⁷⁶See CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, pp. LXXXIV-LX.

9. The French Vicars and the Rites

Navarrete's appeal to Rome was the last of a series of representations made before the Holy See by the two opposing sides of the controversy (Semedo, S.J., Morales, O.P., Martínez, S.J., Polanco, O.P., Navarrete, O.P.). The last quarter of the century witnessed a change, the arrival of a third missionary force: The Vicars Apostolic and the Priests of the Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP). In 1658 the Holy See, through its Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide (founded in 1622 to supervise the work of the Catholic missions throughout the world) took the unprecedented measure of liberating itself from the onerous and restricting privileges of the Portuguese *padroado* in the Oriental Indies. For over two centuries, China as mission territory had come ecclesiastically under that *padroado*, in our case implying that no other diocese could be created in China other than Macao without the consent of the Portuguese crown.

The Holy See was now bent upon creating more ecclesiastical territories to care for the growing communities of China and neighbouring countries. And a way was found to go around the *padroado* by the establishment of *Apostolic Vicariates* (a novelty in Canon Law), headed by *Vicars Apostolic* or *Bishops in partibus infidelium*, directly dependent on the Holy See and independent of the Crown of Portugal. Actually, in 1658, Propaganda Fide nominated three French Vicars Apostolic for the missions of Cochinchina, Tonkin and Laos with faculties to administer to the mission of China. The nominees were the founders of the new French missionary institute, the Paris Foreign Missionaries, namely, Francois Pallu, Pierre Lambert de la Motte and Ignace Cotelendi. In 1680 Mons. Pallu received the appointment as Vicar Apostolic of Fokien and Ecclesiastical Administrator of the entire China.

Expectedly the creation of the Vicariates drew strong protests from Spain and Portugal and from their areas of influence in the Far East. The Religious Institutes with missionaries in China, Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians reacted as vigorously as their political patrons, for the faculties granted to the Vicars by the Bull of Clement IX (*Speculatores domus Israel*, 1669) provided that no missionary in China would be allowed to exercise his ministry unless he presented his credentials to the Vicar Apostolic of Fokien; and that all missionaries were subject to the norms, visitations and corrections emanating from the same Vicars. And one more thing: The Vicars Apostolic would be the competent judges in any controversy arising in China.

The opposition to the Vicars was so strong that in 1678 seven Jesuit Missionaries were ordered to leave their mission and to report to the Holy See. The Manila-based Institutes were equally resolute in opposing what they considered to be the abrogation of their secular privileges granted to them by many Popes exempting them from episcopal jurisdiction in the Indies. So they agreed to dispatch to the Eternal City the Augustinian Fr.

Alvaro de Benavente as spokesmen of their case. As far as the Dominicans were concerned, a minor crisis arose when their missionaries in Fokien, on seeing the Papal document of appointment of Msgr. Francois Pallu, promptly made on oath of obedience to him. A tense situation ensued when they received instructions for the Manila Superiors to suspend the oath until the Holy See officially informed the major religious Superiors about the creation of the Vicariates. But the missionaries, less concerned about *patronato* rights than about the Christian flock under their care, prevailed upon their Superiors with the only valid consideration for Catholics to make: How could they possibly withdraw the oath of obedience to a Vicar Apostolic sent to them by the Supreme Head of the Church? In the end, the Vicars were accepted by all, and if the Dominicans had been overprotective of their canonical exemptions, they were hopeful that the Vicars Apostolic would judge the case of the Rites without Riccian bias. In this they were not disappointed.

Msgr. Pallu died in 1684 after having proposed as his successor one of his colleagues in the Institute of Foreign Missionaries of Paris, Monsignor Charles Maigrot. Maigrot's term of office in the last decade of the 17th century was eventful for two things related to our study: For the Imperial decree of toleration in 1692 and for the rekindling of the Rites Controversy by intervention of a third party. On March 22, 1692, Emperor K'ang Hsi ordered the implementation of a decree of toleration of Christianity emanated – rather reluctantly – from the powerful Board of Rites. Actually, a careful reading of the text shows that Christianity is not mentioned, but only the religion of “some Europeans”, and that the freedom granted to that religion was for “making offerings to the divinity and for keeping their churches” (but not for building new ones).⁷⁷ The decree does imply that K'ang Hsi was sympathetic to Christianity and grateful to the Peking missionaries for various services, those Europeans who “now draft the Calendar” and who “in times of war have built canon and made other weapons” and “went as ambassadors to the Russians.” The latter service refers to the help rendered by the Jesuits Francisco Gerbillon and Tomas Pereira in the negotiations that led to the Russo-Chinese Treaty of Nertchinsk (Nip-Chu) in 1689.

Although the 1692 Imperial decree is significant as a proof of K'ang Hsi tolerant spirit, it would be presumptuous to hail it as another epoch-making “Constantinian Edict,” for it does not go beyond referring to the harmless Europeans who do not break the laws and who “do not seduce the people with false doctrines.” There is also a vague and enigmatic statement that “in the pagodas of the lamas and of the Buddhist bonzos, in the temples of reason and of the sects, it is permitted to burn incense

⁷⁷The only text available to me is the Spanish version published in ENRIQUE HERAS, S.J., *La dinastía Manchu en China*, Barcelona, 1918, transcribed by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, pp. 554-555.

and perform other ceremonies." In practice and for its results, the Decree hardly changed the situation of the missions, but there was not much rejoicing over it either. On the contrary, one year later the Vicar Apostolic of Fokien, Msgr. Maigrot, made a move that rekindled the controversy as if the decree of K'ang Hsi had done nothing.

Maigrot resented the publication in France of a book by Fr. Michel Tellier, S.J., in 1686, entitled *Defense des nouveaux Chretiens et des missionaries de la Chine*, an apologia for the Society of Jesus, maligned in France by its many enemies on all sides. Although Tellier had the right and the duty to defend his Institute, he committed, among other things, the serious fault of misrepresenting the stand of the Dominicans in China by implying in the book that they had become *permissionists*. Fr. Jaques Charles Bressacier, Rector of the Seminary of the MEP Institute, Maigrot's own institute, wrote a prologue praising the contents which followed.

The reactions to the book were quick to appear, some of a passionate nature. In China, the Dominicans Magino Ventallol and Manuel Trigueros wrote to Maigrot clarifying that their brethren, past and present, had never veered away from the stand taken by Morales, Varo, Navarrete, Garcia, del Valle and Alcalá, for whom "*cultum a sinis Confucio et progenitoribus exhiberi solitum esse superstitiosum.*" In Manila, the Dominican Provincial Council commissioned Fr. Bartolomé Marron to write a compendium of the entire controversy's history and of the Dominican position.⁷⁸ In Paris, Bressacier soon retracted the praises he had written in good faith in the prologue to Tellier's book. And in the same French capital, wide publicity was given to Noel Alexander's well documented *Apologie des Dominicaines*.⁷⁹

Unquestionably the most decisive factor in the solution of the controversy at this juncture was the intervention of the Vicar Apostolic of Fokien Charles Maigrot. There were several novelties in his intervention. For instance, he was neither Jesuit nor friar; neither Spaniard nor Portuguese; not subject, therefore, to any influence from political patrons or from the Superiors of said Institutes, but directly responsible to the Holy See. His decisions affected equally all the missions of the Province of Fokien and of the rest of China, and his sentence was final, though appeal could be made to the Pope. He was not an inexperienced man, for after ten years of residence in China he had acquired a thorough knowledge of

⁷⁸MARTOLOME MARRON, O.P., *Sentencia de los PP. Dominicos de la Provincia del Smo. Rosario de Filipinas acerca de los Ritos Chinos*, Mayo 27, 1693 (Ms. APSR, China, t. 74, fols. 76-198) Divided into six chapters. But the Dominicans were satisfied with making "ten or some more copies of the study to be sent to Europe."

⁷⁹NOEL ALEXANDER, *Apologie des Dominicaines missionaries de la Chine ou response au livre du Pere Le Tellier, Jesuite, intitulé: Defense des nouveaux Chretiens, 1687, at al' eccleiaissement du P. le Gobien, de la meme Compagnie, sur les honeurs que les Chinois rendent a Confucius at au morts*, Cologne 1691.

the Chinese people, language, religion and history. It is true that he had more contacts with Dominican missionaries, but his theological preparation (he was Doctor of Theology by the Sorbone) guaranteed his independence of judgement.⁸⁰

On March 23, 1693, almost to the day the anniversary of the Imperial decree of toleration, Maigrot published his famous *Mandatum*, bound to be a sign of contradiction, one of the most praised and maligned documents of the entire controversy. By virtue of his episcopal and pastoral authority, he condemned the practice of the Rites and ordered all missionaries under his jurisdiction to abide by his decision. In November of that year, he notified Pope Innocent XII about the reasons that moved him to arrive at such drastic solution. The Christians - he said - are confused about what course of action to follow in these matters; the missionaries are living with consciences disturbed by scruples; the administration of the sacraments demands a greater degree of certainty than the mere probability of some opinions. Previously he had informed the Holy Office: "There are reasons to think that there exist in China Christians who are also fully idolaters." He was further convinced that nothing but confusion could come out of sending frequent letters to Rome from either side. These were the reasons that moved him to publish the *Mandatum*.⁸¹

In seven tersely-worded points, the *Mandatum* enjoined the missionaries and Christians to adopt the term *Tien-Chu* (instead of *Tien* or *Shang-Ti*) to signify God; it forbade the hanging in the churches of tablets inscribed with the words *King-Tien* (reverence to heaven); the questions submitted by Fr. Martinez to Alexander VII in 1656 were not realistic in many points; the oblations to Confucius were filled with superstitions, and therefore were forbidden; if tablets were used in private houses they must bear only the name of the dead person; also forbidden in the Vicariate was to spread the idea that the ancient sages defined God as the first cause of everything, etc. And added to the *Mandatum* was the declaration that missionaries disobeying these instructions would be deprived of their ministerial faculties.⁸²

By the turn of the century, in Rome (whereto the text of the *Mandatum* has been carried, not by Dominicans but by the priests of the Paris

⁸⁰Mons. Pallu sympathized with the Dominican position even before going to China. During his second trip to the Far East in the middle of 1671, he incidentally met in Madagascar Fr. Domingo Navarrete who was on the way to Rome to report on the controversy. Charles Maigrot was one of the MEP missionaries accompanying Pallu (See CUMMINS, "Navarrete and Pallu", appendix II of *The Travels and Controversies*, II, pp. 425-434).

⁸¹Letter of Msgr. Maigrot to the Pope, Foochow, November 1693, published in N. ALEXANDER, *Apologie des Dominicaines*, I, c. XXIX, transcribed in Spanish by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, pp. 593-594.

⁸²The complete text of the *Mandatum* is in J. FERRANDO-J. FONSECA, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario*, vol. IV, pp. 6-8.

Foreign Mission Society), the document was subjected to thorough study by the Congregations of the Holy Office and of Propaganda Fide. There were signs that the Holy See was considering the formal censure of the Rites. The century opened with a resounding condemnation of twenty nine pro-Rites propositions by the Faculty of Theology of La Sorbone (1700).⁸³ In a last-ditch attempt to stem the tide flowing against them, the permissionists resorted to an almost desperate recourse: In november of 1700, five Jesuits of Peking requested and obtained a declaration by Emperor K'ang Hsi to the effect that the honors given to Confucius and to ancestors were merely national customs without religious significance and that the terms *Tien* and *Shang-Ti* were monotheistic in concept.⁸⁴

But the oppositionists were not late in arguing that the imperial declaration was of little value, since a pagan dignitary, even an Emperor, could not be accepted as judge of orthodoxy for the Church in matters regarding belief and worship. They added that Emperor K'ang Hsi, for all his apparent sympathy to Christianity, was still a pagan at heart. As a Franciscan put it, K'ang Hsi was "atheist among atheists and idolater among idolaters, more atheist than anything else. The last thing he would think of is to become Christian".⁸⁵

After this, the Jesuits in China quickly dispatched to Rome Fr. Gaspar Castner and Fr. Francois Noel, a notable sinologist, to defend their cause. But it was too late, for by that time Pope Clement XI had announced that he was sending a Papal Legate to China, and it was known that a condemnatory Decree against the rites was in preparation.

10. Roman Decisions, 1704-1742

Sixty five years of unceasing discussions had left the problem where it was at the beginning, and worse still, the passions and the confusion seemed to have increased. Finally, Rome decided to withdraw the case to its court. To get things moving, Pope innocent XII instructed the Holy Office to examine thoroughly the entire problem, hearing both sides. Death of the Pontiff in 1700 prevented him from arriving at a sentence, but his successor Clement XI pursued the work with even greater determination, coming finally to a decisive verdict. On November 20, 1704 he issued a Decree condemning the Chinese Rites and ordered it to be sent immediately to Archbishop Charles Thomas de Tournon, Patriarch of Antioch, earlier sent to the Far East as *Legate a Latere* of the Pope in order to settle the twin problems of the Malabar Rites in India and of the

⁸³Latin text published in N. ALEXANDER, *Apologie des Dominicaines*, and translated by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 599.

⁸⁴An authenticated copy of this Declaration in Latin, signed by the five Jesuits, can be seen in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. "Chinese Rites Controversy", vol. III, p. 613.

⁸⁵For some other opinions of contemporary missionaries about Emperor K'ang Hsi, see J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, I, p. 600.

Chinese Rites. Though the Decree was not promulgated until two years later, Archbishop Tournon had knowledge of its substance before his departure from Rome.⁸⁶

After completing his mission in India, Tournon arrived in Peking in July, 1705, to a cordial welcome by Emperor K'ang Hsi, who, no doubt, was hopeful that the Legate would make a favorable judgement about the Rites.

The Dominicans were apprehensive and nervous about the outcome of the Legate's visit, for nobody as yet could know what instructions or message he had been given by the Pope. Perhaps he had been given freedom of judgement and action. What would happen if Tournon made a decision in favor of the practice of the rites? One of the missionaries, Fr. Francisco Cantero, actually wrote to his Superiors in Manila manifesting his misgivings regarding the possible turns of events. "If the decision he makes - writes Cantero - *comes from Rome*, without the possibility of changes to be made by His Excellency, it is presumed that they (in Rome) weighed the arguments of both sides; in which case, even if the decision were against our stand, *we can discharge our consciences and bow our heads*. But if His Excellency is the one to make decisions and if they are based on information provided by the (Jesuit) Fathers, then there will be reasons for us to worry . . . To oblige me to follow that praxis would be as difficult as to move the Ocean's waters from their basin".⁸⁷

Such fears were understandable, but they proved to be groundless. The Patriarch published the Papal decree and it was condemnatory of the rites. Immediately, K'ang Hsi's favour and courtesies turned into frustration and anger, and in October of 1706 he ordered the expulsion of the Legate from Chinese territory. And Tournon left Peking for Macao by way of Nanking, where he stopped for some time. Meanwhile the Manchu Emperor issued an edict obliging all missionaries in China to subscribe to a statement of acceptance of the rites (called *piao*), or else suffer expulsion from the empire. The *piao* was equivalent to an entry or residence visa, and it could be obtained only after successfully passing an examination before an imperial tribunal.⁸⁸ The news of the imperial order reached the Papal Legate in Nanking, and he immediately reacted by publishing a *Mandate*, dated February 7, 1707, enjoining all missionaries *sub poena excommunicationis* to repudiate the rites and giving adequate instructions

⁸⁶The text of the Decree was made public in 1709. It was incorporated in Benedict XIV's Bull *Ex quo singulari*, 1742. We use here the edition of this Bull under the title *Confirmatio et innovatio Constitutionis incipientis "Ex illa die" a Clemente Papa XI editae*, Madrid 1742.

⁸⁷Letter of Fr. Cantero to his Superior Provincial (Fokien), December 4, 1706, published in SANTIAGO PAYA (H. OCIO), O.P., *Reseña biográfica de los religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario*, Manila 1891, II, pp. 409-419.

⁸⁸See a Latin version of this Imperial decree in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, II, pp. 52-53.

about the way to answer at the *piao* test in accordance with the Papal decision of 1704 promulgated by the same Legate.⁸⁹

The Legate's *Mandate* filled the missionaries with anguish and confusion as they faced contradictory orders that put them on different sides of the fence. On one side, those staying with the Legate, refusing the *piao* and being condemned to exile; and on the other, those accepting the *piao* and disobeying the Legate. Appeals against Tournon's *Mandate* were sent to Rome by the Bishop of Macao, by the Vicar Apostolic of Nanking, by the Augustinian Vicar Apostolic Alvaro de Benavente and by 25 Jesuits. For their part, the Dominicans, to a man, together with the Augustinians and a majority of Franciscans, accepted the Patriarch's *Mandate* without hesitation. The Jesuit Joaquin Bouvet tried his best to save the Dominicans from being exiled, by proposing a compromise formula. But it was futile because the friars had made up their minds. The Dominicans agreed among themselves that, if called to choose between the acceptance or the rejection of the *piao*, they would sign this declaration: *Ego, N.N., ex Ordine Praedicatorum religiosus, in publicatione Sanctae Legis, secutus sum praxes P. Matthaei Ricci in his quae non opponuntur decissioni Sanctae Sedis*" (I, N.N., religious of the Order of Preachers, in proclaiming the Holy Law, have followed the praxis of Fr. Matteo Ricci in those matters that are not in opposition to the decisions of the Holy See).

In Hangshow, on May 3, 1707, the Dominicans stood before the Imperial Commissioner who asked them whether they were ready to comply with the Riccian praxis on the Rites, and they answered negatively. Whereupon the Imperial decree was read to them ordering them to leave China. On July 24, they arrived in Macao, having been well treated on the journey, thanks – as they guessed – to the good offices of the Jesuit Fathers before the public authorities.⁹⁰

The dramatic conflict between Church and State could not have ended more tragically. The Papal Legate found himself a prisoner of the Portuguese Government of Macao. The Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians were also there by his side; but the Augustinian Bishop Alvaro de Benavente chose a course of his own. While sympathizing with the Riccian opinion and appealing against the *Mandate*, he did not apply for the *piao* out of respect for the Papal Envoy and he exiled himself in Macao.⁹¹ The permissionists had little problem remaining in China with

⁸⁹Two 18th-century Ms. copies of this *Mandate* in Spanish are in the Archives of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, *Libros 61* and *Libros 53*; the text is published by J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, II, pp. 21-23.

⁹⁰For more detail, J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, II, pp. 52-64.

⁹¹For an overview of the Augustinian Alvaro de Benavente's attitude towards the crisis brought by the Papal Legate, see the following: JUAN MEDINA RUIZ, "Los orígenes de las misiones agustinianas en China a partir de Macao", in *Agustinos en América y Filipinas*, Valladolid 1990, edited by ISACIO RODRIGUEZ, pp. 827-856, JOSEPH METZLER, "Alvaro

their Christian flock but they had to suffer the anguish of having disobeyed the Legate's *Mandate*.

For three years since the arrival of Maillard de Tournon in Macao (June 10, 1707), an atmosphere of gloom covered that Christian city. The Portuguese authorities found here an opportunity to repay in kind the Propaganda Fide's treacherous creation of the Apostolic Vicariates by-passing the rights of the *padroado*. The Legate was kept incommunicado, subject to continuous contempt and abuse, consoled only by the spiritual support of the exiled missionaries and of a sector of the people. The Dominicans saw their convent of San Domingos assaulted by the agents of the government, who deported their Prior to Goa. And in the midst of these acts of government and popular agitation news spread through Macao that Maillard de Tournon had been raised to the rank of Cardinal by the Pope (Clement XI, Papal Brief of October 5, 1707), and six months later the Cardinal's red hat and insignia arrived from Manila. On June 8, 1710, Cardinal Tournon died in Macao, probably of ill-treatment and grief.

The exiled Dominicans arrived in Manila in that same year 1710 to an emotional welcome by their brethren who received them as worthy successors of Morales and Navarrete. For them, the time for debating had practically ended, and if their separation from their missions saddened them very deeply, they had no small encouragement in the supporting messages they received from the highest ecclesiastical authorities. In 1707, Archbishop Tournon writing from his house arrest in Macao, wished to console the Superior Provincial "and the entire Province for the apostolic sufferings of your missionaries who have distinguished themselves for their obedience and devout concern for the cause of religion and of the Apostolic See." Six years later, 1713, Pope Clement XI sent a letter to the same Dominicans, manifesting his "great affection and congratulations", especially for having always remained by the side of the late Cardinal Tournon, showing to him and to the Vicars Apostolic of that region absolute obedience and sincere unbreakable fidelity."⁹²

The last decades of the controversy added relatively little light to the clarification of the issues of the problem. The Holy See had given its verdict in 1704 and kept insisting on its acceptance by all. The pontifical interventions on the matter were all mandatory and final, and we can only list them here:

de Benavente, OSA, en los documentos del Archivo Secreto Vaticano", *Ibid.*, pp. 861-880; JESUS ALVAREZ FERNANDEZ, "Fr. Alvaro de Benavente, agustino, en los documentos del Archivo Romano de la Compañía de Jesús", *Ibid.*, pp. 1035-1050.

⁹²Letter of Charles Maillard de Tournon to the Superior Provincial of the Dominicans, Macao, November 24, 1707 (Copy in APSR, t. 269), published in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, II, p. 71; Letter (Brief) of Pope Clement XI to the Province of the Holy Rosary of the Order of Preachers in the Philippines, April 23, 1713, printed in Rome, 1713. Copy in APSR, China, 7. 269. Reprinted in J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, II, p. 99.

- September 25, 1710. – Clement XI approved the conduct of his Legate a Latere, Cardinal Maillard de Tournon.
- March 19, 1715. – The same pontiff published the transcendental Apostolic Constitution *Ex illa die*, strictly requiring full and total compliance with the Decree of 1704, under the severest ecclesiastical penalties; and besides, he enjoined all missionaries of China to make an oath of submission to the prohibition of the rites “exactly, absolutely and inviolably, without tergiversations.”
- Mezzabarba’s mission. – In 1717 Emperor K’ang Hsi, offended by the Apostolic Constitution, issued a decree of persecution against the Church. The Holy See sent to China another Papal Legate, Msgr. Ambroggio Mezzabarba, to assuage the Emperor and dialogue with him about the problem of the rites. After six audiences with the Emperor, at the beginning of 1721, K’ang Hsi angrily rejected all the Papal proposals and past decisions and threatened the Envoy with drastic measures. Mezzabarba tried to ease the tension by publishing in Macao a pastoral instruction permitting some rites under certain circumstances. But Clement XII, by an Apostolic Brief of 1633, revoked all Mezzabarba’s permissions, declaring them to be null and void as if they had never been issued.

Finally, in 1742, Benedict XIV, by a historic Constitution, *Ex quo singulari*, put an end to all doubts and evasions. Summarizing the repeated decisions emanated from the Holy See through the decades and incorporating the full texts of Clement XI’s decree of 1710 and of the Apostolic Constitution of 1715, as well as the nullified permissions of Mezzabarba and the Apostolic Brief of Clement XII in 1733, Pope Benedict reiterated the condemnation of the Rites, forbade future debates on them under severe canonical penalties and ordered all missionaries going to China to make an oath of obedience to the decisions of the Holy See. The Superiors General and Provincial of the Institutes were told to remove recalcitrant subjects from the mission and send them to Europe.⁹³

We cannot close this pathetic and tiring story without casting a glance at a more simple and golden page of the history of the Dominican mission of China. In a century of passionate debates, in which the evangelizing zeal never diminished, the Dominicans started and finished that period with five glorious martyrdoms for the faith, not related to the rites controversy. In 1648 the Protomartyr of China, Blessed Francisco de Capillas, was executed in Fogan for the preaching of the Gospel, in the wake of the Manchu takeover. Exactly one hundred years later, and five years after the publication of Benedict XIV’s *Ex quo singulari*, four other Dominicans shed their blood for the faith in the same town of Fogan: In

⁹³BENEDICT XIV, Apostolic Constitution “*Ex quo singulari*”, July 11, 1742. On the reception of the Papal document in China, see J.M. GONZALEZ, *Historia*, II, pp. 301-311.

1747, Blessed Pedro Sanz, Vicar Apostolic of Fokien; and in 1748, Blessed Francisco Serrano, Bishop-Elect, Blessed Joaquin Royo and Blessed Juan Alcocer. Their beatification processes started almost immediately after their executions *in odium fidei*.

They were martyrs without provocation. They went to China, like all missionaries, seeking the conversion of the Chinese to Christ. This above all. But dedication carried them to the supreme sacrifice of their lives for their friends the Chinese.

Of the 119 martyrs of China beatified so far by the Holy See between 1889 and 1956, only the above-mentioned five Dominicans lived, worked and died in the century of the controversies. All the others worked and died in China in the 19th century.

11. Epilogue. Reversal or Updating?

Granting that the Rites Controversy was disastrous for the advancement of evangelization of China, the blame for the disaster cannot be apportioned neatly. Both sides can be said to have their share of culpability; both can be exonerated of bad faith. Today it has become purely academic to prove the various extremes of the dispute: Whether the emperors, given more time and opportunity, could have been converted, or whether science was the right or wrong approach in converting the Chinese; whether the direct approach used in other parts of the world was applicable to China; whether the Chinese literati were as interested in a foreign religion as they were in science; whether a Christianity combined with those rites would have been swallowed by the rites to the point of disfiguration, just as China has swallowed and disfigured all its conquerors. The would-have-beens are numerous, and it is better that they remain in the realm of possibilities and of scholastic futurabilia.

Historians of the controversy can only try to assess the position of either side of the contending parties and explain the reasons for their opinions, and to determine why the Church acted as she did. Certainly the Church, in due time, explained clearly that the main motive for her final decision was doctrinal. "The condemnation of the Rites – wrote the Holy Office at the end of the 19th century – was not a merely disciplinary measure aimed at bringing about uniformity of pastoral action in the mission, but was *relevant to the Catholic doctrine itself*" (*non ad disciplinam sed ad doctrinam pertinere*).⁹⁴ The Church in the 17th and 18th centuries felt that the integrity of faith required payment of a high price, the possibility of converting an unforeseeable number of Chinese. For

⁹⁴Instruction of the Holy Office addressed to Fr. Anthony M. Anderledy, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, and communicated by the latter to the whole Society with Circular Letter of October 1, 1891; quoted by F.A. ROULEAU, "Chinese Rites Controversy", art. in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. III, pp. 613, 614.

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"when there is clear conflict between purity of doctrine and the principle of accommodation, there is only one course open to the Church, no relativist in matters of religious faith."⁹⁵

It was easier for the Church to give a verdict on moral principles related to the Rites (*quaestio juris*) than to establish what was really going on in the minds of the Chinese when they performed the rites (*veritas facti*). But all testimonies considered, the Church became convinced that the links between the rites and superstition (perhaps even idolatry) were real and strong, and she acted accordingly.

Except for Popes Innocent X (1645) and Alexander VII (1656) who were at variance of each other in answering to questions about the rites *as presented*, all the other Supreme Pontiffs were unanimous in condemning the practice of the rituals on at least six solemn occasions: Innocent XII (1697), Clement XI (1704, 1710, 1715), Clement XII (1733) and Benedict XIV (1742).

Almost two hundred years after the last Papal ruling, Pope Pius XII, in a historic endorsement of an *Instruction* of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, dated December 8, 1939, permitted to the Catholics the practice of the Chinese Rites and lifted the imposition of the oath binding all missionaries of China. What change was this? What had happened? Simply that the Church, rather than reverse her past decisions, accommodated herself to a new situation in China. The preamble of the famous *Instruction* is worth quoting here: "It has been found out that in some Oriental religions, certain ceremonies, though *in antiquity linked to pagan rites*, at present, with the changes of customs and mentality brought about by the passing of time, keep only a *civil significance* of piety towards ancestors, love of country and courteous relations towards neighbour."⁹⁶

Indeed, by the 1930's the position regarding the rites bore little or no resemblance to the situation of the 17th and 18th centuries. Decline of religious beliefs and practice in the West has been paralleled in China, where the Confucian texts had lost their canonical character, not only among the masses but even officially, for the Republic of 1912 had dethroned Confucius.

In the face of this modern Roman updating, we can close this paper by quoting some pertinent words of James S. Cummins: "The modern Roman decision fits the contemporary situation, and as such [Domingo Fernández] Navarrete would have applauded it, for his attitude was summed up in this words: "The past is gone, it is the present generation that concerns us."⁹⁷

⁹⁵DUNNE, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

⁹⁶The Latin text is in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 32 (1940), pp. 24-26.

⁹⁷CUMMINS, *The Travels and Controversies*, I, p. LXXII.

APPENDIX I

The Chinese Terms used in this Article

<i>Word in Artic.</i>	<i>Mand. roman.</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Ch. character</i>
Canton	Guāndong	City (1)	廣東
Chi	Jī	To sacrifice	祭
Chu-hsi	Zhuxi	A philosopher	朱熹
Jujian	Fujian	Chin. province	福建
Fokian	Fujian	Chin. Province	福建
Fogan	Fuan	County, Fujian	福安
Foochow	Fozhou	Cap. of Fujian	福州
Hokkien		Xiamen language	(廈門話)
Hsiao	Xiào	Filial piety	教
Hsu Kuang-chi	Xú Guang qí	(Scholar)	徐光啟
K'ang-hsi	Kang Xi	(Emperor)	康熙
King tien	Jing Tian	To adore	敬天
Ming (Dinasty)	Míng	1368-1642	明
Muyang	Mú Yáng	Vill. in Fuan	穆陽
Nanking	Nán Jīng	Chinese city	南京
Nanchang	Nán Chang	Chinese city	南昌
NipChu,	Ní Búchú	Russian city	尼布楚
Peiwei	Pái Wèi	Tablet	牌位
Piao	Biao	Manigest	標
Pian chien. . .	Biàn zhèng	(Book) (2)	辯正
Shangti	Shàngtì	God (3)	上帝
Sancian	Shàngquan	Island, Canton	上川
ShunChi	Shún Zhì (4)	Hist. period	順治
Tamshui	Tànshuǐ	City in Taiwan	淡水
Tianchu	Tianzhū	God	天主
Xing (Sheng)	Shèng	Holy	天聖
Wuchow	Wú zhou (5)	Guāngxī city	梧州

- (1) Actually the name of the province is "Guándong," while the city is called "Guángzhou", but in European languages both provinve and city are called Canton.
- (2) *Pian Chien Chiao Cheng Ch'uan Shi Lu, Apología de la verdadera religión*, a presentation of the Catholic Religion by Fr. Juan Cobo, O.P.
- (3) Today it is the term for "God" most commonly used by the non-Catholic Christians.
- (4) Shun Zhi is not the emperor but the period of reign of the first emperor, whose name was Shì Zǔ.
- (5) City in the province of Guángxi, near the border with Guántong.

APPENDIX II

CHURCH IN CHINA AND THE "CHINESE RITES"

*International Symposium on the Chinese Rites Controversy at the
University of San Francisco, October 16-18, 1992*

In the midst of a growing concern over possible changes in mainland China, and particularly over the present situation and future of the Catholic Church there, an international symposium was held last October 16-18 at the University of San Francisco, California, on the "Significance of the Chinese Rite Controversy in Sino-Western History."

The symposium was organized and presented by the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, an institution founded in 1984 by Fr. Edward Malatesta, S.J. as an entity of the California Province of the Society of Jesus, which in 1988 was incorporated to the Center for the Pacific Rim, both of them becoming a component of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of San Francisco.

Since its foundation, the Ricci Institute has had as its main objectives to promote cultural exchanges between China and the West; to publish books and articles on Chinese-Western cultural history; to make available to scholars the rich Jesuit library of Chinese historical works, microfilmed archival material and other resources; and to sponsor scholarly exchanges through seminars and symposia. The present symposium has been one of its most significant achievements. Credit for its organization goes to Fr. Edward Malatesta, Director of the Institute, and to Prov. D.E. Mungello, Associate professor of History at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The idea of holding such a symposium seems to have been hatched several years ago, at least as early as September 1990 when it was formally announced at the International Convention on the historiography of the Catholic Church in China, held at the University of Louvain. By then, an opportune date for holding this symposium was found in the third centennial of the so called Edict of Toleration issued in 1692 by Emperor Kangxi (written also K'ang Hsi in many western studies).

A total of 175 persons were registered as attendees for the inaugural session on October 16. About 40 of them were either Chinese nationals or of Chinese ancestry, some of them coming from continental China, others from Taiwan and Hongkong, and others, probably the majority, students following courses in the United States or in Europe on scholarship grants in various centers of learning. The great majority of attendees were Americans, while a few came from a variety of countries: Spain, Germany, Italy, Singapore, France, Australia and the Philippines. There were delegates from twenty five universities and colleges, including five Asian universities (among them the University of Santo Tomas, Manila),

two Australian, one German, and seventeen American. Expectedly the biggest representation came from the University of San Francisco with 23 attendees.

Since the members of the religious institutes are no longer made conspicuously noticeable by their distinctive habits, it is not easy to assess the number of institutes attending. There were certainly about a dozen Jesuits, two Dominicans from the Holy Rosary Province (Fr. Fidel Villarroel and Fr. Carlos R. Linera), two Maryknoll priests and one priest from the Missions Etrangères de Paris. Conspicuously absent were the Franciscans and the Augustinians, two Orders involved in the 17th century Rites Controversy, especially the Franciscans. There were too some non-Catholic scholars, and even some non-Christian Chinese from mainland China. However, no other religious but Jesuits, were programmed to participate as speakers.

As said earlier, the occasion adduced for holding the symposium at this time was the coincidence of the third centennial of an enigmatical Edict of Toleration issued by Emperor Kangxi in 1692. In fact, the keynote address of the introductory session, by Prof. Jonathan D. Spence, of Yale University, seemed to place the main limits for the chronological frame within which the entire symposium would center its attention. He spoke on "The Kangxi Emperor and the Europeans (1661-1722)." It was during this Emperor's reign that the Rites Controversy turned from an internal, intermissionary dispute into an open confrontation between the Chinese Imperial Court and the higher authorities of the Catholic Church, both in Rome and in China. An able and intelligent ruler, a self styled "man from heaven", who cared personally for the issues affecting the empire and handled a well-organized machinery of intermediaries and informants, Kangxi reacted to the final condemnation of the Rites by Rome in 1704 with his own measures to banish the Papal Legate and all the missionaries who did not accept the Emperor's interpretation of the nature of the Chinese Rites.

Within such main chronological framework, it was normal that a great part of the subject matter offered for discussion in the papers or in the debates from the floor were religious, political and diplomatic events of the last phase of the Rites Controversy, rather than the doctrinal differences of the earlier decades among the Jesuits themselves after the death of Fr. Matteo Ricci, or between the Jesuits on one side and the Dominicans and Franciscans on the other, a period in which the Chinese were practically absent in the dispute about the licitness or illicitness of permitting the "rites" to the Christian converts.

Considering the place, the organizers and the speakers, it was logical and not surprising that the Riccian interpretation of the "Chinese Rites" would be given utmost attention and would be studied in depth and sympathetically. The Chinese speakers, for reasons of their own, tended

to picture the Popes who condemned the Rites as more intolerant with their missionaries than Emperor Kangxi who allowed the missionaries to stay in the empire. Actually Kangxi was as much intolerant that the Popes, or more, towards the missionaries who refused to sign the *piao*, that is, the imperial pro-rites conditions. For evident reasons of their own, the five Jesuits who acted as speakers, commentators or chairmen elaborated solely on the Riccian interpretation of the Rites. They did it with great power of conviction and with the backing of their very rich archival documentation.

It seemed logical too that this symposium, as organized, could not be the ideal venue for ventilating the mendicant friars' side of the controversy. For one thing, no Franciscan was present and no Dominican was invited to present a paper on the subject. Secondly, the lecturing scholars were less familiar with the viewpoint of the Dominicans, due probably to lack of exposure of Dominican documentation. But this is, of course, the friars' fault. And thirdly, perhaps the prevailing feeling *a priori* among the attendees gave for granted that the attitude of the friar missionaries in China in the 17th century was one of anti-adaptation, anti-inculturation and anti-Chinese way of thinking and living. This was not definitely the case, and it has to be corrected.

In the confrontation between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities on the Rites questions, Emperor Kangxi, the friend and protector of the Riccian missionaries at the Court of Peking, had obvious reasons for being offended at the *Mandatum* issued in 1693 by Msgr. Charles Maigrot, Vicar Apostolic of Fujian (Fokien), condemning the practice of the Rites. Understandable too was Kangxi's disillusionment and anger at the announcement by the Papal Legate Archbishop Charles Thomas de Tournon that the Pope had condemned the practice of the Rites. But the Church had doctrinal reasons for disagreeing with the Imperial Court. However both Maigrot and Tournon had more critics than advocates and they were made to appear as the "bad guys" of the movie.

The case of Maigrot, a man closely associated with the Dominican missionaries of Fujian, was handled by Prof. Claudia Von Collani, of Wurzburg University, who pointedly underlined Maigrot's poor show of scholarship before the tribunal of the literati of Kangxi's court. Maigrot, of course, was more at home with the rural people of Fujian. Tournon was also pictured negatively in the scholarly paper of Fr. Malatesta, Director of the Ricci Institute, who disserted about "A clash of two wills: De Tournon' 1707 condemnation of the Chinese Rites."

Other papers of high scholarly level were those of Fr. John Witeck, S.J., "Antoine de Beauvolier's reply to Maigrot", and of Prof. D.E. Mungello, "Justification of the Rites by a 17th century Chinese scholar, Chang Hsing-yao." Both papers added valuable points to the cause of Riccian view of the Rites.

There was, however, an opportunity given to the mendicant friars' point of view in the paper read in the third session by Prof. John Wills, Jr., of the University of Southern California, who spoke about the topic "From Manila to Fu'an: Asian contexts of Dominican policy." No stranger to the Dominican Archives in Manila, Professor Wills presented a non-polemical picture of the early Dominican apostolate among the Chinese in the Parian district of Manila as well as in the province of Fujian (Fokien), and more concretely in the area of Fu'an (Fogan). Two things were more particularly stressed in his speech: One was the Dominican social concern and apostolate of charity in their hospital of San Gabriel, in the Parian, which had some echo even in the mainland China; and secondly, the great surprise the first missionaries of China received upon arriving there when they saw the Christian converts practicing some local rites which had the appearances of pagan ceremonies.

It was at the open forum in this third session that a Dominican, Fr. Fidel Villarroel, Church History professor at the University of Santo Tomas of Manila, intervened to emphasize the Dominican contribution to establishing cultural and religious bridges between China and the west, even before the Rites Controversy arose. As early as in 1593, the Dominicans founded the first Philippine press, publishing two books in Chinese, one of which, the *Shi-Lu*, was not an ordinary catechism for the use of the neophytes, but a work written in the most pure classical Chinese, containing the fascinating dialogue between the author, Fr. Juan Cobo, O.P., and a group of Chinese literati, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. The literati often quoted the nine classic books par excellence, while Cobo brought in some scientific notions of the West, anticipating Ricci's greater contribution to science.

Villarroel added that the champion of the friars' anti-Rites cause, Fr. Domingo Navarrete, while in Rome, insistently refused his proposed nomination as Bishop of China. Instead, he suggested to Propaganda Fide the nomination of a Chinese, Fr. Gregorio Lo, who actually was consecrated as first Bishop of China. Navarrete's main work, the *Tratados Históricos*, on Chinese history, government, society, culture, laws, religions, published in Madrid 1676, was judged by his opponents as worth being condemned by the Spanish Inquisition for exalting a pagan country above the society of the Spanish subjects of his Catholic Majesty. Navarrete – concluded Villarroel – may have been hard-headed and anti-Rites, but he was certainly pro-Chinese in everything else.

Today the Chinese Rites Controversy continues to be as baffling to modern scholars as it was to the 17th century missionaries. No solution was found at the symposium, but new approaches were tried, new documents revealed, and the exchange of views was conducted at the highest level of scholarship.

The last session tackled the subject of "Contemporary situation of the Rites in China," with Prof. Richard Madsen, of the University of Califor-

nia, San Diego, as speaker. Madsen pictured in detail his personal impressions of the celebration of a solemn sung Mass at the Tiensin Cathedral, performed by an "orthodox" or patriotic Bishop and clergy with a superb display of splendid and colorful ritual in the most typical Tridentine, pre-Vatican style. Today two Catholic churches are emerging in China: the official, "orthodox", patriotic church aligned to the Government policy of disentangling the Church from all jurisdiction of the Vatican; and the traditional, "heterodox", underground and persecuted church, which remains faithful to Rome. The patriotic church seems to prevail in the urban centers, while the underground church survives with greater vigor in the rural areas (a high percentage of Catholics in Fukien belong to the underground church). The former is bound to remain more isolated and stagnant, while the latter is more attuned to post-Vatican trends in liturgy and in theology.

Can the two churches be reconciled? Or are we facing two irreconcilable modern versions of the old Chinese Rites controversy? Speaking at the Introductory session of the symposium, Fr. Malatesta narrated his personal experience at a concelebrated Mass in the chapel of the official "patriotic" (and flourishing) diocesan Seminary of Shanghai. About a dozen Catholic priests and nuns from Hongkong, Taiwan and elsewhere are teaching theology there (with the permission of the Holy See). These professors had to make the painful decisions of not joining in the concelebration of a Mass at which some officials of the Communist government were in attendance.

Will the Church some day have to handle the thorny problem of choosing between two Chinese churches as she had to choose between two antagonistic views of the Chinese Rites? Between the heir of a state church and the heir of an underground church? These questions were not explicitly asked at the symposium, but they came up to the mind of this reporter.

The symposium appropriately ended with the celebration of a Sunday Mass at the Saint Ignatius Church of the University of San Francisco. Readings were provided in English and Chinese, and a Chinese choir alternated liturgical melodies with the university choir. After the mass, at a side altar prepared for the purpose, a ceremony was held in "Veneration of Ancestors," using the ritual approved by the Catholic Hierarchy of Taiwan.

For a closing word of thanks, this reporter must express here his indebtedness to the organizer, Fr. Edward Malatesta, for the cordial and warm hospitality extended to him at the Jesuit Residence in the grounds of their High School. □