

# **Power and Translation:**

**The Jesuits' Translation of the Christian God into Chinese**

**Ming Xing Wang**

**A Thesis  
in  
The Department of Études françaises**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

**February 2004**

**© Ming Xing Wang, 2004**



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services

Acquisitions et  
services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file* *Votre référence*  
*ISBN: 0-612-91133-0*  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
*ISBN: 0-612-91133-0*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this dissertation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de ce manuscrit.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the dissertation.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

**Canada**



## **Abstract**

### **Power and Translation:**

### **The Jesuits' Translation of the Christian God into Chinese**

**Ming Xing Wang**

This thesis is a case study of the controversies over the Chinese equivalents of the Christian term “God” during the Jesuits’ proselytizing efforts in China. The author of the thesis tries to show, in a contrastive way, how the power relations between China and the Spanish and Portuguese colonials from the sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries had a significant impact on the Catholic mission strategy in China and their translation of the essential Christian term “God” into Chinese. Through a diachronic analysis, the writer attempts to construe how power was exercised and contested for control and dominance by translating differently the Christian term “God” into Chinese discourse. The aim of the thesis is to investigate how a text is conditioned and shaped by power differentials and the significance of this to Translation Studies as a whole.

## Acknowledgements

During my graduate studies at Concordia, I have benefited a great deal from my teachers and fellow students, and I feel deeply indebted to them for their care, encouragements, and critical comments on my work.

First of all, I would like to thank my thesis director, Dr. Sherry Simon, for her generous support, warm encouragements and high quality academic guidance, without which this thesis would have been impossible. The germinating ideas in her writings will inspire me for further research in Translation Studies. My thanks also go to my co-Director, Dr. Leo Chan at Lingnan University, Hong Kong, for his perceptive and meticulous guidance from the beginning of my graduate studies to the final stage of my thesis writing.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Jost Netzsche, who, though we never met, provided with me a lot of information by email on the research of Bible translation and the history of the “Term Question.” His expert assistance has proved to be invaluable for me, especially during the early stage of my thesis preparation.

## Table of Contents

---

1. Introduction.....	1
2. A Theoretical Review of Power and Translation .....	5
3. The Problematics of Power and Translation.....	14
4. The Arguments on the Incommensurability of Language and Thought .....	18
5. The Nestorian Adaptation of Christianity to the Chinese Context .....	23
6. The Translation of the Christian “God” during the Jesuit Mission . .....	28
The Early Jesuit Translation of the Term “God” .....	35
Matteo Ricci’s Equation of the Christian God with <i>Tian</i> and <i>Shangdi</i> .....	42
Nicco Longobardi’s Treatise on the Term Issue .....	58
The End of Translation.....	68
7. Conclusion .....	82
Bibliography .....	97

## **1. Introduction**

As the title of this thesis indicates, we are mainly concerned with the relation between power and translation or, to be more specific, the interaction of power differentials between East and West, and, consequently, the impact of coercive power on translation. We do not deal with the issue in an abstract way; rather, we orient our theoretical investigations within the context of the Jesuit Mission in China, which was launched in the middle of the sixteenth century and has been regarded as one of the most significant evangelical activities in Chinese history.

To begin with, we may problematize our thesis by raising a relevant question: How is power related to translation?

To answer the question, let us first of all review the Foucauldian thesis on discourse and power. Discourse, as defined by Foucault, refers broadly to “ensembles of discursive events,”<sup>1</sup> or systems of statements in certain fields and specialized areas of social knowledge, in which truth can be made known. As the knowledge concerning our identity and the nature of this world is not easily perceived, it can only be made identifiable through discourse. What characterizes discourse is that through it, people get to know who they are, what this world is and what their relation to others is about. The importance of discourse lies in its role in a power system. Since discourse is linked with truth, it is “at once the object of struggle and tool by which the struggle is conducted.”<sup>2</sup> Those who possess power tend to use various controls to ensure the desired flows of discourse. As a result, the truth is manipulated for advantages of the dominant, represented by institutions, states, or the collective. Eventually, the process of producing

knowledge becomes a discursive event subject to the “will to truth” and the “will of power.”

Being instrumentalized to represent discourses, translation, which is also involved in the production of knowledge, is presumably determined by the “will to truth,” and subject to the “will of power.” However, the key questions pertaining to our inquiries are: How does translation effectively produce knowledge and lead to desired truth, which eventually yields a hierarchical power relationship? With what translative strategies can translators materialize the act?

Among other theoretical approaches to translation issues, the responses of postcolonial studies researchers seem to be of most immediate relevance to our questions: the invisible relation between power and translation is highlighted in postcolonial translation theories, in which some scholars not only explore the oppressive aspects of power, but also investigate the interactive operations between power and translation.

In their academic inquiries, Vicente Rafael, Tejaswini Niranjana and Lawrence Venuti, among other post-colonial translation theorists, investigate power and its impact on translation. Rafael and Niranjana address translation issues in the colonial context, whereas Venuti examines translative acts shaped by American political and cultural hegemony, which can be considered as another form of colonization. Though different in their approaches to unequal communication, these translation theorists share a common ground, where they focus on how translation is manipulated and shaped by the “will of power” to legitimize the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, and on how translation is used as a means to resist the coercive power relationship established by the colonizers, or hegemonic power. For them, translation is no longer purely a process of



linguistic transfer, but a highly ideologically charged activity. To subjectivize the colonized as their inferior, or as their imitations, the colonizers, mainly, though not exclusively, appeal to source text based translation strategies to bring the target language text under the power of the source text. In this way, the target language culture becomes subservient to the source language culture, and the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized is enacted by means of the source text translation approach. For the colonizers, the translation method is a means to legitimize their absolute rule over their supposed inferiors. To resist this oppressive relationship imposed on them, the colonized or oppressed use target text based translation to absorb the source text into their language system and culture, that is, to assimilate the foreign into their own values.

However, our questions are: Can these theoretical approaches apply to our case study? If the answer is “no,” what other perspectives can be yielded from our inquiries? To answer these questions, we will first of all review the theses of the translation scholars mentioned above. Then, we problematize our case study in the contexts of the Spanish and Portuguese maritime expansion, and the Jesuit mission vis-à-vis China’s Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the early period of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). We will further examine how the power differentials, which are demonstrated by a sharp contrast between the Portuguese colonizers and the Chinese Empire in political, military, cultural and religious aspects of power relations, make the Jesuit mission to China a different experience from those undertaken by the Jesuits and their brethren in the world. We expect to see how the power relations affect their mission policy and consequently their translative acts. In particular, we will historicize how the Christian God was translated and how the power differentials between the colonizers and the Chinese Empire were

embedded in the translation and subsequent disputes over the Christian term “God.” Finally, based on our investigation of the relation between power and translation, we will draw a conclusion as to what constitutes a paradigm for translation strategies and what the Jesuits’ translation experience in China means to Translation Studies as a whole.

## 2. A Theoretical Review on Power and Translation

In *Contracting Colonialism*, Vicente Rafael explores unequal translation in the colonial Tagalog society by linking the process of translation with conquest and conversion:

The Spanish words *conquista* (conquest), *conversión* (conversion), and *traducción* (translation) are semantically related. *The Real Academia's Diccionario de la lengua española* defines *conquista* not only as forcible occupation of a territory but also an act of winning someone's voluntary submission and consequently attaining his or her love and affection. *Conversión* literally means the act of changing a thing into something else; in its more common usage, it denotes the act of bringing someone over to a religion or a practice. Conversion, like conquest, can thus be a process of crossing over into the domain—territorial, emotional, religious, or cultural—of someone else and claiming it as one's own. Such a claim can entail not only the annexation of the other's possessions but, equally significant, the restructuring of his or her desires as well.<sup>3</sup>

For Rafael, in the context of the transformation of Tagalog society and the Spanish colonization, conversion and conquest went hand in hand; *traducir* (to translate) served as the mediating activity. Both conversion and conquest needed translation, which is synonymous with *convertir* (to convert), *mudar* (to change) and *trocar* (to exchange). Vicente suggests, as the colonial conquest required the conversions of interests of the colonized, translation was used to “express and relate interests within and across linguistic boundaries.”<sup>4</sup>

In order to have a complete conquest, that is, the conquest of the subjects' body and soul, translation was used as an essential means to convert the interests of the natives

into those of the colonized. First, the Tagalogs' native language had to be retranslated into a structure similar to the Spanish linguistic system: the native language signs were reshaped into a Roman alphabet, which paved the way to an effective preaching of Christian doctrines. The change of the linguistic system, in turn, fostered a hierarchical relationship between the Tagalogs and the Spanish, wherein Spanish was deemed to be midway to the Source of the Truth, God.

During its long evolution, Spanish had been restructured grammatically and semantically according to the model of the sacred language, Latin, and was considered by the missionaries to provide better access to the Source than the Tagalog language. The native islanders were asked to use the language as a step toward Latin, and then ultimately to reach the Christian God. Thus, translation became a “process of making known the unknown, of distinguishing between ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ native practices, and finally of harnessing native signs to further the spread of God’s Word and consolidate its gains.”<sup>5</sup> This hierarchical relationship became more and more evident when conveying some essential Christian terms, such as “*Dios*,” “*Espiritu Santo*,” and “*Jesucristo*.” For missionaries, the native language was incapable of expressing the Truth, the original forms of the terms had to be kept. When the Tagalogs were converted to Christianity, they needed to appeal to Spanish for the Truth. Consequently, the hierarchical relationship between Spanish and Tagalog alienated the natives from their history and culture—their supposedly sinful past and inferior language system. Their native language, which could not lead to the Source, was displaced as a derivative of Castilian and then Latin.

Equally important, the Tagalogs needed to be translated into the likeness of the Spanish (in the sense of conversion). This involved a series of activities: restructuring of social systems, promulgating Castilian laws, and the Christianization of their customs and conventions. Hence anything that impeded conversion had to be translated: those Tagalogs who lived outside the missionary's scrutiny were considered bad and were regrouped together in the towns. Social norms and customs that were contrary to Christianity were regarded as sins and had to be reformulated according to Christian values.

By using various means, the Tagalogs were translated into a colonial hierarchy and reduced to Spanish imitations. With these measures taken, the Spanish colonial power, in essence, subjugated the natives, thereby, establishing a master and servant relationship. However, the conversion was never completed, as Rafael points out: "the result was a colonial order that seems to be premised on a mutual misunderstanding of each other's intentions, rather than on the unambiguous imposition of the ruler's will over the ruled."<sup>6</sup>

How do we account for the misunderstanding? We must view it from several aspects. First, for the natives, learning Castilian was presented as a kind of behaviour, which they adhered to so that they could "engage in some kind of exchange with the colonial authority."<sup>7</sup> Rafael takes an example of *audit* (song) by the Tagalog writer Pinpin and interprets the process of their interaction. The *audit* is of typical *ladino* fashion, in which Spanish and Tagalog appear in the same line. The style largely conformed to the colonial conversion strategy: the native language needed to be translated into the middle language, Castilian, through which the Tagalogs could reach the Source of God.

However, the islanders read the message in a different way. The Castilian rhythm and verse in the song coexist with that of the Tagalog, but do not harmonize with each other. It was not a way for the natives to understand the source message and purity of the language leading to God; rather, it reminded them that the Castilian was an intruder both to their language and land, as Rafael notes:

Translation [...] is not designed to coincide with ritual in that it is not meant to recall the promise of speaking a purely transparent language. Rather, it is meant to alert and habituate the natives to the interruptive effects of Castilian. Tagalogs such as Pinpin would thus have at their disposal a way of inoculating themselves against the larger shock of conquest.<sup>8</sup>

The audit is seen, in this way, as a mode of the Tagalogs' resistance in their own right, and dilutes the colonial messages imposed on them. Thus the translation is turned into an appropriation of the colonial discourse in order to serve their own interests.

In addition, some essential Christian messages were also appropriated by the Tagalogs to serve their own purposes. The term "Paradise," hence, was signified as a place "without death, only joy and happiness and life," "no heat, no cold, /no hunger, no thirst." More importantly, the term also connoted the dissolution of social classes and hierarchy. As Rafael notes, "Paradise marks the end of translation. For this reason it also signals the end of conversion."<sup>9</sup>

In order to gain their rights to enter Paradise without translation and conversion, the Tagalogs reinvented the signification of death, which later developed into "an idiom of patriotism and national duty."<sup>10</sup> In our terms, they consciously fought to end translation so that the hierarchical colonial relationship would no longer be imposed on them. Is it

the way to Paradise that was rooted in the islanders' minds? Not that we know of, but what we do know is that it is different from the Castilian Christian message the Spanish clerics intended to infuse into them.

In his monograph, Rafael historicizes the role of translation in the transformation of Tagalog society and the Spanish colonial conquest of the Philippines. For the colonizers, translation was a means to change Tagalog linguistic identity and social system into a likeness of that of the Spaniards. Their ultimate goal was to conquer the natives physically and spiritually. However, the Tagalogs intentionally appropriated the messages and the colonial authority on their own terms for “the circumvention of Spanish signifying convention and the power relation that accompanied them.”<sup>11</sup> Eventually, the process of translation evokes a resistance to contracting colonialism, as Rafael finds the theme in a letter written in 1892 by Jose Riza, a Pilipino national hero: “I prefer to risk death and willingly give my life to free so many innocent people from such unjust persecution [...] I also want to show those who deny our patriotism that we know how to die for our duty and our convictions.”<sup>12</sup>

Rafael interprets the colonial power relationship in terms of translation, conversion and conquest. His underlined theme is built upon the model: translation, appropriation and resistance.

If this theme is only embedded in Rafael's descriptions and analysis, Niranjana expresses hers more explicitly in *Siting Translation*: translation could be used as a form of resistance against colonialism in postcolonial India. Like the Spanish colonizers, the British in the nineteenth century had to appeal to translation to “have a new character imprinted on them [Indians].”<sup>13</sup> It is a process known as interpellation. This

representation, as Niranjana explains, is produced “in such manner as to justify colonial domination.”<sup>14</sup> Translation consequently is not only produced in the fields related to linguistics and literature, but also “deployed in different kinds of discourses—philosophy, historiography, education, missionary writings, travel writings.”<sup>5</sup>

Niranjana takes William Jones, a British Orientalist, as an example to justify her position. Being a translator who also served on the Supreme Court in Calcutta, William Jones translated the ancient Sanskrit laws into English. He aspired to translate the laws in their purity and correctness according to his own understanding and interpretation. Niranjana points out that William Jones’ work was based on his presumption that as the natives were unreliable interpreters of their own laws and culture, European lawgivers needed to work out a correct and unbiased version, which would make the Indians abide by their own laws. Thus, Indian culture would retain its “pure” form on its own terms. It was Jones’ hope that those untrustworthy Indians be punished by their laws—the translated ones. Through English translation, Indians were interpellated as inferior, shrouded in religious mystery and decadence, submissive and unreliable.

Unlike other translation theorists, Niranjana addresses the (post)colonial issue with a strong post-structuralist overtone. By appealing to a deconstructionist theoretical framework, Niranjana attempts to justify her view and approach in her interventionist translation.

Niranjana analyzes two versions of a twelfth century Indian spiritual poem *vacana*: the first was translated by S.C Nandimath, L.M.A. Menezes, and R.C.Hiremath, and the second by Ramanujan. She labels the S.C Nandimath and the Ramanujan as Christianized and Romanticized respectively, in that the former uses “effulgent” for



“*jyōtī*” (light), “glory,” which has no Kannada equivalent; the latter uses “metaphor” for “*upama*,” which means comparison. She attacks these translators for “attempting to assimilate Saivite poetry to the discourses of Christianity or of a post-Romantic New Criticism,” and for “ [reproducing] some of the nineteenth-century native response to colonialism.” She offers her own version: instead of “metaphor,” she uses “figuration” for “*upama*,” the name of the gods “*Kannadisa*” is kept in the original form “*Guhēśāvarā*,” his symbol “*linga*.” She admits: “the deliberate roughness of my version of the *vacana* allows the text to ‘affect,’ [...] the language into which it is being translated, interrupting the ‘transparency’ and smoothness of a totalizing narrative [...]”<sup>16</sup> She claims: “the deconstruction initiated by re-translation opens up a post-colonial space as it brings ‘history’ to legibility.”<sup>17</sup> She considers her translation as “speculative, provisional and interventionist.”<sup>18</sup>

Though provisional and speculative, her interventionist translation view is shared by Venuti, who develops a clear-cut method: foreignizing vis-à-vis domesticating. Like Rafael and Niranjana, Venuti gives attention to translation’s role in power systems. More specifically, he addresses his concerns about the unequal translation relation under Anglo-American hegemony and the resistance of minoritized countries or groups. Venuti is perhaps less preoccupied by the conceptualization of translation than Niranjana is, but is more so by the political significance of translation. This has prompted Tymockzo’s accusation that Venuti’s theoretical hypothesis contains nothing but “leftist rhetoric.”<sup>19</sup>

In Lawrence Venuti’s seminal works (1998, 1995, 1992), he focuses on power differentials behind translation, in particular, by making reference to the United States. Unlike the Spanish colonialists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who sought to

occupy land and convert the natives in the Philippines and the New World, the United States occupies no land. Instead, it imposes another kind of occupation: political, cultural and military hegemony. Venuti points out that because of the economic and political ascendancy of the United States, English has become the most powerful instrument for international communication, which has been used by America to reap its economic and cultural dominance. By selling translation rights of English books to non-English speaking countries, the United States has gained its commercial success and at the same time, “British and American publishing, in turn, has reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership.”<sup>20</sup> As Britain and the United States are predominantly monolingual, their publications in English, which reflect their cultural values, are unreceptive to Others. Consequently, “fluent English” is promoted, especially in translation.

The fluent English style in translated works has a serious impact on the source language: it not only replaces the source language norms with those of the target text, but also effaces the peculiarities of source text culture. As a result, the “foreignness” of the source culture is not accessible to the target readers. As such, transparent English, Venuti claims, provides the target readers with “the narcissistic experience of recognizing his or her own culture in a cultural other,” hence “enacting an imperialism that extends the domination of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture.”<sup>21</sup> To resist Anglo-American cultural hegemony, Venuti advocates that foreignizing strategy be used to disrupt transparent English. For Venuti, choosing this translation method not only responds to the call for “resistancy” against Anglo-American dominance, an option

for those minoritized countries or groups, but also prompts other actions leading to establishing an equal intercultural relation in the world. .

From the review, we see that for these postcolonial translation studies theorists, translation is no longer considered purely as a linguistic activity with one verbal or non-verbal sign transferring into another; nor does it happen in an ideal milieu for equal intercultural communication. On the contrary, translation is the area where translation researchers often raise questions about unequal intercultural communication: how the oppressive relationship between the colonizing and colonized is enacted through translation and how power differentials are reflected in transformed texts or signs. For them, the translative act is negotiated into a power system to produce designed knowledge to enforce and legitimize a power hierarchy. However, while translation creates coercive power for submission and dominance, it can also be used by the peripheral groups as an instrument to displace the effects of the knowledge imposed on them, and consequently provoke resistance.

### **3. The Problematics of Power and Translation**

From the overview of translation theories pertaining to colonial or hegemonic contexts, we may construe the power differentials behind and within translation activities, with one side being colonizers or hegemonic powers, and the other opposing party being the oppressed, native or marginalized. The former tries to impose their will on the other by translating them into their own image of inferiority, so as to legitimize their rule for their own interests. The colonized or minoritized counteracts in the form of resistance either by appropriating translated messages—mistranslation, as with the case of the Tagalogs, or by the interventionist and radical foreignizing method to subvert original messages for their own agenda. As such, translation becomes a site for the exercise of power.

While valid in their theoretical approaches to analyzing the power differentials that regulate translation, we must call into question the role of power in translation. Generally, if not simplistically, the dominating power uses translation a means to domesticate the colonized or the marginalized, and the latter's resistance would follow the pattern of interventionist translation. However, since the exercise of power determines the adoption of a translation strategy, we may raise another, different but pertinent, question: if power differentials change, will the translation strategy also follow the same basic domesticating and foreignizing pattern? To be more specific, if what the colonial powers tried to conquer were not a weak Indian tribe or native islanders cut off from the rest of the world, but a powerful country of their rival status, such as the Ming Dynasty of China, would the colonial authorities, to a lesser degree the missionaries, also

use the predominately unified translation strategy as practised in North America and the Philippines? If not, are the postcolonial translation theories relevant to our inquiries, given that China was not conquered militarily by the colonial power in the said history? If they are relevant, then, how is power contested and negotiated through translation? What are the parameters for their translation and translation strategy?

The relevancy of post-colonial theory to China has been much contested. In the article “‘Colonization,’ Resistance and the Uses of Postcolonial Translation Theory in Twentieth-century China,” Leo Tak-hung Chan argues, “To be sure, China has not been formally occupied by a foreign power in the past century, so she has not experienced a ‘colonial’ period as did her Southeast Asian neighbours, Indian and most African countries.” He claims, “for mainland China, where the majority of translations are still carried out and published, the term ‘postcolonality’ may not mean much.”<sup>22</sup> For Leo Chan and other academics, “postcolonality” is pertinent exclusively to those countries militarily occupied by the colonialists. While China was not occupied, it would not be affected by colonialism.

However, first, we must understand postcolonial theories more broadly. Colonization is a violent and oppressive activity, as seen, not only by military conquest of the subjects, but also by discursive events that displace the colonized in terms of culture and customs. As Gentzler and Tymockzo point out, “colonialism and imperialism were and are made possible not just by military might or economic advantage but by knowledge as well.”<sup>23</sup> In addition, one of the three areas for postcolonial studies is: “The study of all cultures/societies/countries/nations in terms of their power relations with other cultures/etc.; how conqueror cultures have bent conquered cultures to their will;

how conquered cultures have responded to, accommodated, resisted or overcome that coercion.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, postcolonial studies is not only concerned with those countries militarily occupied, economically exploited, but also with cultural interactions between different countries and nations (both colonized and not colonized) in the context of global cultural circulation.

The argument raised by Leo Chan among others denies the very fact that cultures interact with each other in the context of global exchanges. It would be unthinkable that colonial and imperialist discourses do not yield any oppressive and unequal relationship in certain countries, simply because they are not colonies. For example, in the present era of American cultural hegemony, no one would be blind to the fact that American hegemony penetrates into other cultures by means of cultural contacts with other countries, with English as a main tool, though most often the United States does not have to occupy other countries.

The conceptual and theoretical frameworks chalked out by the postcolonial translation theorists are relevant to our concerns and inquiries, in that the conversions in China during the Spanish and Portuguese maritime expansion and colonization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bear some common characteristics with other regions of the world. In the main body of our thesis, we will see that what the Jesuits were trying to do in China was to convert the pagan Empire and replace its state ideology, Confucianism, with Christianity. The religious campaign itself was involved with the process of producing the desired knowledge, aiming at placing Chinese culture under the power of Christianity. The very act of the missionaries’ translation in question implied their desire of imposing an oppressive power hierarchy on the Chinese.

But, admittedly, the Jesuit efforts in China also show facets that are dramatically different from their campaigns conducted in other areas of the world, both in terms of mission policy and discursive strategy. In the following chapters, we will explore in detail the diversities and parameters of the power differentials in the said contexts.

Naturally, we will not deal with power in general, but some of its specific aspects. As defined in some standard dictionaries, such as *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “power” not only denotes cultural, economic, military, and religious dominance, or control, but also the technical capacities of things. In our thesis, however, we will mainly explore, though other aspects of power involved, cultural, intellectual and political power relationships that shape the translative act during the Jesuits missions. We will see that the translation of the term “God” is regulated and negotiated first of all by cultural power differentials, then, by intellectual power after Matteo Ricci’s death in 1610, and finally by the political struggles between the Chinese Emperor, Kangxi (1654-1722), and the Pope over their presence in the Chinese Christian’s life.

#### **4. The Arguments on the Incommensurability of Language and Thought**

Of missionary translations in China, none has been as controversial as the rendering of the Christian term “God” into Chinese. Controversial, because the translation first undertaken by the early Jesuits and then by Matteo Ricci was seriously questioned and evolved into a factional battle as part of the so-called “Controversy of Rites,” which lasted for decades. After rounds of fierce fights in China as well as in Europe, the Chinese equivalents for the Christian God, *Tian* (heaven, or sky) and *Shangdi* (translated as Lord on High, King of the Upper Region and the Sovereign on High) were judged to be in violation of the Christian Truth and banned by the Pope’s decrees, along with the rites for paying respect to the ancestors of the Chinese and Confucius. Greatly angered, the Chinese Emperor, Kangxi, considered the edicts as part of the scheme designed to subvert his empire and responded by issuing a royal decree, formally announcing the termination of the previous edict for the tolerance of free dissemination of Christianity in China. Those who did not follow the example set up previously by Matteo Ricci, the Superior to the China Mission, were deported. As a result, the early effort to Christianize China failed.

The term question has also attracted intensive attention from scholars in different fields. Historians, theologians, and philosophers have given their perspectives on what a proper equivalent for God should be, why Christians could not even agree with each other over a common term and why the translation was so important a matter that it jeopardized the early Christian mission in China. Over the past centuries, their academic



inquiries have given illuminating insights into the question proper as well as the polemics concerning the Chinese language, philosophy, theology and history.<sup>25</sup>

However, their academic inquiries over the term question and related issues “tend to be scattered”<sup>26</sup> and still rest on philosophical and theological arguments. To those scholars, the Chinese equivalent of the term “God” is only a matter of high philosophical and theological significance. Attention and insights are still lacking from translational and historical angles on the issue. Specifically, the early efforts by the Jesuits to find the Chinese equivalents for “God” have not been contextualized with the Christian mission in the early colonial era. In this thesis, we examine the translation issue in this historical context; in particular, we will focus on its social and political aspects, rather than on its theological doctrines.

Among the scholars who are interested in the destiny of the Christian missions in China, Jacques Gernet, a French Sinologist, raises a provocative question on the relation between the Chinese language and thought pattern and the Christian missions in China, especially, during the Jesuits’ proselytizing efforts. In his monograph *China and the Christian Impact*, Gernet attributes, basically if not wholly, the failure of the Jesuit mission in China to the incommensurability of the Chinese language and thought with that of the West:

Our examination of Chinese reactions to the writings and preaching of the missionaries has often revealed differences in mental categories and frameworks in all sorts of areas: for example, the relation between politics and religion, the role of reflective consciousness or spontaneity in morality, concepts of spiritual substance or of a principle of organization inherent in the cosmos, beings, and society.

We would ask what, if any, could be the part played by linguistic peculiarities in the obvious divergencies between Christian and Chinese ideas. Perhaps we could pose the following simple question: taking a language such as Chinese as a starting-point, would it have been possible for Greek philosophy or medieval scholasticism to develop? To which the answer would probably be 'no.' But what proofs can we adduce to justify that immediate impression?<sup>27</sup>

It seems to us that Jacques Gernet is not the only one that holds such a view. In his "Paradoxes and Aporias in Translation Studies," Theo Hermans agrees with Gernet:

When in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Jesuits were trying to convert the Chinese to Christianity, they needed to express Christian, Western concepts like "God" and "heaven," "soul" and "sin," in Chinese. In 1604 Matteo Ricci wrote his treatise on *The True Meaning of the Master of Heaven* in Chinese, but the only terms available to him were those which echoed Confucian and Buddhist usage. As a result, the Christian Concepts he wanted to convey were locked in a discourse wholly incommensurable with the Christian message [...]. Needless to say, the Jesuits were greatly puzzled by their lack of success in China.<sup>28</sup>

Levefere has also a similar thesis in mind. He insists that "cultures that see themselves as central in the world they inhabit, are not likely to deal much with Others, unless they are forced to do so."<sup>29</sup> Levefere, then, reinforces his point by drawing instances of Chinese translation history. He asserts that when forced to deal with Others, the Chinese could easily "acculturate the others on the terms of the receiving." This assimilative practice, especially translation, was predominant until classical Chinese was invalidated as the language for "communication between officials, literati, and intellectuals" and "the concomitant rise of the Western influence"<sup>30</sup> was ushered in. For Levefere, the classical language was the effective means that helped the Chinese to

acculturate Others, and, at the same time made the introduction of the foreign impossible. Levefere's statement seems to echo Gernet's thesis that foreign thought could not develop in Classical Chinese. Thus, the core of the issue is still the question of the incommensurability of language and thought.

However, in our following discussion on the Jesuit translation in China, we encounter a different story that contradicts the academic claims mentioned. Matteo Ricci did realize the differences between the Western and Chinese languages, and thought patterns. He noted, the Chinese (literati) "knew of no distinction between substance and accident," and "lacked the rules of logic and knew of no distinction between natural and moral goodness."<sup>31</sup> But he still translated the Christian concepts into fluent classical Chinese; in particular, he equated *Deus* in Latin with the highly Confucian canonical terms *Tian* and *Shangdi*. Ricci could have translated the "foreignness" of the Christian ideas from Latin or Portuguese into Chinese, like what the Spanish missionaries did in the Philippines, who reshaped the Tagalog language system into the Castilian likeness and retained the original form of "*Dios*" in Tagalog.

The view mentioned above largely ignores the historical context that accompanied the translation, and their interpretation of the translation issue is too simplistic. We maintain that translation does not happen in a vacuum—there is always a context where translation is engaged; nor is it an innocent linguistic process—there is always a certain agenda behind textual choices. We will deal with the response in the conclusion of this thesis.

In order to understand the China Mission better, we would like to raise the following questions: What constitute the sharp differences between China and other

colonized countries in the context of the global evangelization and colonial expansions of the said period? How could the differences be possible?

To answer these questions, we must first review Christian mission history in China and see how political and cultural powers shaped evangelical policy, then we historicize the term issue and take a look at what other Chinese term for the Christian “God” was established by the pre-Jesuit clerics, and how and why the Christian God was translated into Chinese so differently.

## **5. The Nestorian Adaptation of Christianity to the Chinese Context**

The earliest Christian translational activities could be traced as far back as the Tang Dynasty (618—877) when the Nestorian Christians came to China to preach their religion. Persecuted at home, the Nestorians came along the Silk Road, which linked China with the Middle East and Europe, to the capital of the Empire, Chang An (now Xi'an), in 635.<sup>32</sup> At the time, the Empire enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and openness. Merchants, scholars, monks, and ordinary people from the Middle East and Europe as well as the rest of Asia converged here to engage in various commercial, cultural and religious activities.

The emperor warmly welcomed the Nestorians. As a gesture of religious tolerance, the Nestorians were allowed to practice their religion under the sponsorship of the emperor. Consequently, the Nestorian Church grew rapidly both in terms of the number of followers and their facilities for preaching.

However, though their religious practice was encouraged by the royal power based on the consideration of the imperial politics, nevertheless, we must not ignore the fact that in the centralized kingdom, the position of the Nestorians was still marginal, especially compared to other native Buddhists and Taoists, the Nestorian Church only depended on imperial patronage for its survival as foreigner religion in China.

Because of their vulnerable position in the power hierarchy of the Empire, Nestorian Christians adapted themselves to Chinese culture for their religious practice. In particular, they accommodated themselves to the established norm to avoid rivalry with other religious orders.

According to the commemorative tablet for the Nestorian missions in China buried in the capital before the Nestorian Church's disappearance from the country and unearthed in the seventeenth century, we can see that the Nestorians translated a lot of charged Christian terms to conform to the dominating cultural discourse and power system. They made no distinction between the Christian and Buddhist terms, as some typical examples shown: the Christian Church and priest were translated into the Buddhist temple and monk; Sunday Service and God were turned into Buddhist ceremony and *Arhat*; the Bible, Trinity, saints and angels were rendered as the Truth Scripture, Three-in-One and Buddha respectively.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the tablet cites extensively the usages from the Confucian classics, such as *The Book of Change* and *The Book of Poetry*. What is conspicuous is that praises for God and the emperor appear in the same line in the verse engraved on the tablet.<sup>34</sup> The conformity to the established hierarchy is especially evident in one of the earliest translations of their books.

尔时,弥师诃说天尊序娑(婆)法云:异见多少,谁能说;经义难息事,谁能说.天尊在后显何在?停止在处其何?褚佛及非人,平章天阿罗漠(汉),谁见天尊?在于众生,无人得见天尊,何人有威得见天尊?为此天尊颜容似风,何人能见天风?天尊不盈少时,巡历世间居编(徧).为此人人居带天尊贵气,始得存活.<sup>35</sup>

This is an extract from the beginning of the first Christian document, *The Sutra of Jesus the Messiah*, which was translated into Chinese in 638, with the assistance of a Chinese man named Ching Chin. The above classical Chinese passage can be literally rendered into English as follows:

At the time, the preaching of the laws of Xu Po (Jehovah), *Tianzun*[the Heavenly Honoured], the Messiah spoke thus: there may be more or less different views, but who can tell the remarkable meaning of the *Jing* [scripture, sutra]? Who can tell the appearance of *Tianzun* before his revelation? Where did he dwell? All the *Fo* [Buddha], *Feiren* [Kinnaras ], *Pingzhangtian* [head *Deva*] and *Alomo (han)* [*Arhan*], who can see *Tianzun*. No man has ever seen *Tianzun* abiding with people. Who has ever had the sublime power to see *Tianzun*? This is because *Tianzun* appears as wind. Who could possibly see wind? *Tianzun* is always going around and is constantly present everywhere. Man in this world can live because of the *Qi* [breath, strength or vital energy] brought by our *Tianzun*.<sup>36</sup>

From the extract, we see how the Nestorians express the Christian concepts in Chinese terms. Most of the sinicized terms embody Buddhist and Taoist connotations. The Christian God is rendered as *Tianzun*, which is associated with a Taoist deity; the Christian saints and angels become Buddha, *Kinnaras*, *Deva* and *Arhan*, which integrally represent Buddhist identity.

As seen from the expressions, the Nestorian document appears to be a heterogeneous blending of different religious concepts, which certainly compromise its original theological messages. Some scholars suspect that the translator's insensibility to the religious differences was largely due to their lack of translation experience.<sup>37</sup> However, we must note that the translation strategy employed by the Nestorian Christians is more than simply a translational approach to render, into the target language culture, a theological system acceptable both to the Chinese and the Nestorians themselves. We believe that the Nestorian Catholics could not have found a better solution for the translation, because they were overwhelmed by the dominating cultural discourse of the Chinese Empire.

Similar evidence could be found in the same sutra. In the religious document, the bishop of the mission, Alopen, takes pains to show that Christianity contains nothing contrary to Chinese values, including loyalty to the state and emperor as well as filial piety to parents. With their translation, the Nestorian Christians attached themselves to the Buddhists, the most powerful religious order of the Empire, which could sway the destiny of the nation. Thus, it is no wonder that the Nestorian Christians were considered one of the Buddhist denominations in China,<sup>38</sup> even though they tried to identify themselves by building up their own churches and spreading their own doctrines.

Because of the Nestorians' marginal position and inability to identify themselves in the dominating discourse, they were doomed to obscurity, and disappeared from China. Catholic Mission historian, Kenneth Scott Latourette, summarizes the failure of the Nestorian Mission in China in the following passage:

To the average Chinese, Nestorianism may have appeared to be another of the Buddhist sects that were so flourishing under the Tang. The confusion may have been facilitated by the use of Buddhist phraseology by Nestorian translators and by a close association between some Nestorian and Buddhist leaders. The Nestorians, in other words, in trying to clothe their faith in dress familiar to the Chinese, may have sacrificed in part its distinctiveness and defeated their aim.<sup>39</sup>

Obviously, the Nestorian Catholics faced a serious dilemma: with their translation, the Nestorians could appease the religious hierarchy of the empire — it was legitimate, in that without this strategy, they would have disappeared earlier. But adopting the strategy also made them unidentifiable among other religious orders.



It is quite true that in the later days when Nestorians translated their scriptures, they largely ignored the doctrines of Christianity and rendered their ideas like Buddhists did. In *The Sutra of Mysterious Peace and Joy*, a free adaptation of “The Sermon on the Mount,” we no longer see any elements of Christianity. It seems that the Messiah is “surrounded by his disciples, like the Buddha.”<sup>40</sup> The theme of the sermon focuses on the process of attaining peace by conquering inner desire, which is “more akin to Buddhism or Gnosticism than to Christianity.”<sup>41</sup>

In 845, the Nestorians, who were suspected of having a connection with a Buddhist intrigue, which posed a serious threat to the Empire, were ordered by the emperor to either go home, or become lay people.<sup>42</sup>

## **6. The Translation of the Christian “God” during the Jesuit Mission**

After the complete disappearance of the Nestorian Church, no large organized Christian missions appeared in China until the Jesuits arrived in the Empire in the sixteenth century. This time, the Christian mission was different from the Nestorians' attempt to propagate their evangelical messages in China. Being regarded as heretics in the West, then marginalized in the Empire and assimilated into Chinese discourse, the Nestorian Catholics had left little impact on the life of the Chinese. However, in the renewed efforts undertaken in the sixteenth century, the Jesuits were backed up by powerful colonial empires, such as Spain and Portugal, and European Christian Crowns.

When historicizing the Christian missions in China as well as in the other parts of the world, scholars tend to distinguish between the different mission strategies employed among the Chinese and among other peoples, mainly in the Americas and Asia: the accommodation strategy in China and the militant approaches in the Americas and the rest of Asia.<sup>43</sup> The two approaches show contrasting traits: the former allowed the Jesuits to adapt themselves to Chinese culture in terms of terminology, customs and rites, whereas the latter, which was colonial in nature, was enforced in the Americas and Asia (the Philippines and Goa in India), to convert pagans and at the same time consolidate colonial rule. It is characterized by disrespect for ethnic cultures, local customs, and by forceful ways of conversion. Given broad colonial expansion as the context, why were these divergent policies carried out in different regions? What was behind their mission strategies?

As historian George Dunne maintains,<sup>44</sup> for most Europeans, Christianity is indistinguishable from European culture. During its long development, the Christian Church has woven its religious rituals and sense into the fabric of everyday life of Europeans. In turn, European culture integrates itself into Christianity. During the Spanish and Portuguese maritime expansion from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, Christianity identified itself with Europeanism and colonialism.

For the Christians, the militancy and intolerance of the Crusades became their legacy. Swords and crosses, natural allies of their religious campaigns, developed into conquests and missions in the maritime expansion era. All non-Christians were deemed to be pagans and their cultures part of evil schemes of the Devil. To convert those heathens and eradicate their cultures were the duties of European princes; to disseminate Christian values in the European cultural forms was their priority. As a result, the marriage between the royal and holy powers was inevitable. The European Christian Crowns considered the spreading of the Christian faith as their duty. By resorting to various means, including the military ones, they conquered Indians and Asians, which signified the extension of the kingdom of God to them. After they controlled the regions, the Spanish and Portuguese gave the privilege to the Catholic Church to convert the natives to Christianity. In return, the holy authorities approved of the monopolizing of discoveries and trades by the maritime colonial powers. In this way, a special form of conquest and mission came into being, which linked the Christian mission with colonialism.

Another result of the colonial conquests was nationalism. This form of Europeanism identified itself with the cultures of the patron countries, be it Spain or

Portugal, as Gorge Dunne puts it: “To the Portuguese, Christianity in any but a Portuguese wrapping was inconceivable. The same was true to Spaniards.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, the Christian missions were also linked to national pride, which were eventually subjected to the national interests of the countries involved.

The Spanish and Portuguese conquests were conducted in such a religious context; their intense economic and political ambitions were disguised as religious pursuits. When the mendicants and Jesuits undertook their evangelizations in the Americas and Asia, they were destined to contract with the colonial schemes supported by the Christian Kings, who patronized their respective regions for spreading Christianity. Missionaries regarded the colonial conquests as part of their efforts to uproot paganism in the world, and consequently legitimized the colonial power hierarchy in the conquered regions, as demonstrated by Rafael’s case study in the Philippines, and those colonized were brought under both the colonial and Christian powers. Naturally, such evangelizations were usually accompanied by guns and preceded by violent conquest.

However, despite this general scenario of conquest and mission, the China Mission initiated by Xavier in the middle of the sixteenth century does not share these common features. On the contrary, the evangelical strategy implemented seems to be more conciliatory than militant. We may easily identify the differences from the missionary activities carried out in Goa and China.

In the sixteenth century, Goa of India was an area occupied by the Portuguese colonial power, where the Jesuit mission was based. As Dunne reveals, the laws and decrees issued by the kings and governors stipulated that all the pagans be driven out of the Portuguese colony and any rituals contrary to Christian values forbidden; the practice

of religions other than Christianity was illegal. In addition, certain sections of the city were designated as areas only for Christians. Moreover, Christian life generally followed the pattern set by the Portuguese. Converts were thoroughly portugalized: they had to change their names into the Portuguese form, wear Portuguese clothes, and observe Portuguese customs. In this way, they forced these converts to alienate themselves from their original cultural identities and subject themselves to the new colonial hierarchy. For those clergy who were born in the native land and educated in the Portuguese style, they were treated as a second-class clergy.<sup>46</sup>

Quite different from Goa, the situation of China in the sixteenth century posed a serious challenge to the colonialists and missionaries. Though showing a degree of decline, the Ming Dynasty was still considered a powerful empire, enjoying not only a high order of culture, but also considerable economic power and military might, which, in a certain sense, outshone most European countries, as described in Matteo Ricci's journal:

To begin with, it seems to be quite remarkable when we stop to consider it, that in a kingdom of almost limitless expanse and innumerable population, and abounding in copious supplies of every description, though they have a well-equipped army and navy that could easily conquer the neighbouring nations, neither the King nor his people even think of waging a war of aggression. They are quite content with what they have and are not ambitious of conquest. In this respect they are much different from the people of Europe, who are frequently discontent with their own government and covetous of what others enjoy.<sup>47</sup>

In the same journal, Ricci cannot stop praising China's civil administrative system, which allows the learned to manage the country. The Chinese are regarded as a "noble race."<sup>48</sup> Despite this, the Jesuit father still believed: like the Greek and the Romans, the

Chinese were still pagans, who had to be converted, their culture ought to be eradicated, one way or another.

As noted in Ricci's journal, when he mentions the Chinese caught by the Spaniards and the Portuguese as slaves, he defends the colonialists' interests indirectly:

Many of them [the Chinese] are also taken out of the country as slaves by the Portuguese and the Spaniards. These few at least have an opportunity of becoming Christian and of thus escaping the slavery of Satan.<sup>49</sup>

Like other Europeans, Father Ricci was not only imbued with the belief in eradicating paganism, but also linked the Christian mission with the colonial design, which would help those natives out of the Chinese (satanic) slavery. In Ricci's mind, to be a Portuguese or a Spanish Christian slave was better than being a pagan Chinese.

However, China remained closed to the outside world. Because of its self-sufficient economy, high degree of civilization and superior military might, China considered itself as the centre of the world and its culture far more advanced than that of the rest of the world. Thus, a mentality of self-complacency was fostered among the elites and the ordinary people: the world needed China more than it needed other countries. Another factor that contributed to China's closure of its door to the outside world was based on the real threats from the outside: the Japanese pirate assaults along the Chinese coasts, and imminent incursion from the Portuguese and Spanish colonialists based in the Philippines and other regions of Asia. As the dangers emerged from the outside, the royal hierarchy had to take tougher measures against possible invasions by forbidding its subjects to have any contact with the outside world, especially along its coastal regions.<sup>50</sup>

In the eyes of the Spanish and Portuguese, China was a closed and isolated empire, yet for economic interests, as well as for their colonial expansion, they had to resort to opening China's door: the Spanish colonialists occupied the Philippines, the nearest place to China's Fu Jian Province; the Portuguese occupied Macao as a base for trade and Catholic mission. This would, as they believed, put them in a better position so that once opportunity came, they could act immediately to fulfill their ambitions.

Macao, the nearest missionary base to China, witnessed the rehearsals of the Portuguese-styled mission. The portugalized conversion was required for the Chinese converts, who "had to take Portuguese names, wear Portuguese clothes and adapt to Portuguese customs."<sup>51</sup>

Despite the repeated efforts, China's doors remained closed to them, which seriously impeded the colonial expansion of Spain and Portugal in the East. For missionaries, the "closed-ness" of China provided no opportunity to convert those pagan Chinese. Some of them appealed to the European royal authorities for military interventions. In his book that interprets the Jesuit mission history in China, Etienne, a renowned French historian, cites evidence for the support of a military aggression for the spreading of Christianity in the empire. In a letter to the King of Spain, the Bishop of Manila, Sanchez, suggests:

Supposés établis le titre et le droit que Votre Majesté tient et possède dans toute L'inde en tant que Roi d'Espagne et, parce qu'elle est Roi de Portugal, ceux qu'elle détient en Chine, [...] je soutiens [...] qu'elle peut envoyer une armée assez grande pour que toute la puissance de la Chine ne puisse lui *nuire*, et cette armée a le droit d'entrer dans les provinces de Chine et de les traverser; elle peut imposer la paix à

ceux qui troubleraient l'ordre, elle peut obliger le Roi et les gouvernants de ce royaume à laisser prêcher l'évangile et donner sécurité au prédicateurs.<sup>52</sup>

Some Jesuits in Macao shared this view by appealing to the European Christian princes to stop useless quarrels and to take measures to “force the sovereign of China to grant to the missionaries the right to preach and to the natives the right to hear the truth.”<sup>53</sup>

But China was not Mexico, nor were its people like native Indians; resorting to military conquest was certainly out of the question. The mission policy implemented in the Americas and other parts of the world was not applicable in China. Thus, taking a different approach to converting the Chinese was absolutely necessary.

A new missionary approach, later called the accommodation strategy, was conceived by Xavier and reinforced by an Italian Jesuit, Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), the Visitor of the Mission in Asia (the highest rank of the Jesuits in the region). Based on his observation and reflection on China's situation and reality, Valignano wrote to the General of the Society: “The only possible way to penetrate will be utterly different from that which has been adopted up to now in all the other missions in these countries.”<sup>54</sup>

Consequently, in Macao, the colonial policy of portugalizing Chinese converts was discarded. Chinese converts who lived in mainland China did not have to go to Macao for conversion. More significantly, instead of portugalizing the Chinese, the missionaries were required to adapt themselves to Chinese culture.<sup>55</sup>

The accommodation policy, a breakaway from the dominant mission model in other parts of the world, was based on the understanding that since the conversion accompanied



by power was unlikely, more tolerant measures had to be taken to Christianize China. But this is not to say that they had to compromise their faith—it was a matter of a means and an end. In China, they had to modify their aggressive missionary strategy practised in other regions of the world. It is in this context that the Catholic mission had a fresh start; consequently, Christian messages had to be translated in line with the policy of accommodation.

### **The Early Jesuit Translation of the Term “God”**

From the start, the Jesuits made the utmost effort to implement the accommodation policy set by Valignano in order to enter China. First, they worked hard to become proficient in the Chinese language; second, they changed their black Jesuit garb and put on Buddhist clothing. In so doing, they hoped to impress the Chinese by displaying their admiration for Chinese culture, and by expressing that they had no ill intention in coming to China. Essentially, they presented themselves as the monks from the West, which in the Chinese people’s eyes in ancient time stood for India.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, as part of their new strategy, the missionaries also learned Chinese and acquired Chinese names.

Why did they claim to be monks, similar to Buddhists, not Confucian literati, whom they later claimed to be? Was it an important part of the mission strategy?

This has to be understood from the early experience of the Jesuits in Japan prior to the China mission. In Japan, Buddhist monks enjoyed a higher position in the feudal power hierarchy. Following his interpreter’s advice, Xavier started his pioneering efforts

to evangelize Japan by claiming to be a Buddhist monk. His intention was quite clear: as a Buddhist monk Xavier could win over the upper class by his preaching Christianity under Buddhist clothing. Once the upper class was converted, the masses would follow suit.<sup>57</sup>

Also under his Japanese interpreter's advice, he translated the Christian God into *Dainich*, a Buddhist deity for universal light—*Mahavairocana*, and *Hotoke*—Buddha. Paradise was rendered as *Jodo*, which refers to pure land and paradise of Buddha, *Amitabhi* and *Suthavati*.<sup>58</sup> As a result, the missionaries in Japan were thought to be Buddhist monks, who spread the laws of Buddha.<sup>59</sup>

With such a strategy, Xavier did win a lot of converts in Japan. However, his practice was likely to mingle Buddhism with Christianity, which would undermine the very purpose of his mission. But, as the initial effort, the missionary's method was legitimate, given that the social environment in Japan was different than the rest of the world: Japan was still in the feudal system and its culture was much influenced by its neighbour, China, both by Confucianism and sinicized Buddhism. In order to have a foothold in Japanese society, the Jesuits had to conduct their proselytizing activities in such a manner. They believed that any misunderstanding incurred during the mission could be remedied later.

In addition, as recounted in Father Ricci's journal, when Xavier worked among the Japanese, he learned:

Whenever they [the Japanese] were hard pressed in an argument, they always had recourse to the authority of the Chinese. This was quite in keeping with the fact that they also deferred to the wisdom of the Chinese in questions pertaining to religious worship and in matters of public administration. Whenever it happened that they

commonly asserted, that if the Christian religion was really the one true religion, it surely would have been known to the intelligent Chinese and accepted by them.<sup>60</sup>

Since China was the true source of Japanese culture, the Jesuits had enough reason to believe that China ought to have similar conditions to Japan. Thus, a like approach, instructed by the Visitor to Asia, Valignano, was formulated and put into practice. Subsequently, the Jesuits changed their clothes to that of Buddhist monks, attempting to attach them to the Buddhist order, which had a considerable influence in the life of the Chinese.<sup>61</sup> By doing this, they hoped to make their missionary activities more acceptable in the Empire.

As to why the Jesuits did not put on the clothes of the Confucian literati class at the time, we believe that the Jesuit missionaries had just arrived in mainland China and they only knew the secular role of the Confucian scholar class in the power hierarchy. Given that their role in China was religious, putting on the mandarin officials' clothes would be unsuitable for functioning their duty as missionaries, at least from the start of their campaign.

As seen from the Jesuit mission policy, the Jesuit fathers' main purpose was to convert the Chinese, it would be quite necessary for them to translate their catechism into the language the native people spoke, so that more people would understand what they were here for, and eventually the Chinese would embrace Christianity. The initial work was undertaken by Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607), one of the pacesetters of the Jesuit Mission to China.

In the middle of 1581, Ruggieri wrote a tract in Latin, *a Vera et brevis divinatium rerum expositio*. Several months later, with the assistance of his Chinese interpreter in

Macao, he translated it into Chinese roughly as *Tianzhu shilu* (The True Record of the Lord of Heaven). The first Chinese version of the Catholic catechism was printed and more than four thousand copies were distributed in Canton, where the early Jesuits' mission station was based.<sup>62</sup>

The supposed Chinese translation was a faithful summary of the Latin version of the Christian tract, which could also be considered a systematic reduction of the original. As Gernet points out, the Chinese version was the first attempt to adapt Christian doctrines to Chinese society, not only in terms of language norms, but also Chinese tradition.<sup>63</sup>

What appears significant is that Ruggieri translated the Christian God, *Deus*, into Chinese as *Tianzhu*, a term which contained a strong Buddhist connotation. In his Journal, Ricci records the story of the invention of the Chinese term for *Deus*. In 1583, when the Fathers had to leave Zhao Qing city in Guangdong province for a while, they asked a young man named Chen (who appeared in Ricci's journal in Latin pronunciation as Ciu-Ni –Co) in the vicinity to take care of the daily mass. After they returned, the Fathers paid a visit to him, and they found:

The young man himself had set up the altar in a large room and above it, in large letters, placed a sign reading: Thien-Ciu [*Tianzhu*]. To the God of Heaven. On the altar he always kept seven or eight vases in which he burned a sweet smelling incense. Here too he had developed the habit of praying at the stated times and of offering his sacrifice, as he explained it, to the God of Whose existence he had some knowledge.<sup>64</sup>

*Tianzhu* was the Chinese term for the Buddhist deity, *Devapati*. It is quite clear that the young neophyte associated *Deus* of the Christian God with the Buddhist god. The

early missionary practice would appear to make the natives believe that the religion the missionaries preached was similar to Buddhism, as the Chinese knew nothing about Christianity. The missionaries were also not reluctant to accept the available term, because, for the Chinese, *Tianzhu* did not evoke the figure of *Skra Devendra*, a presiding god of thirty-three gods in the Heaven. Only those well-instructed Buddhist monks seemed to link *Tianzhu* with the chief god.<sup>65</sup>

Because of scant records about the motivation behind the adoption of the term, we do not know exactly why the missionaries accepted the neophyte's choice. But considering the mission practice in Japan and the Jesuits' early efforts to clothe themselves as Buddhist monks, their translation could be seen as part of their initial attempt to adapt themselves to Chinese culture, as they assumed mistakenly that Chinese Buddhist monks also enjoyed high prestige as Japanese monks did.

Since it is the first Chinese version of Christian catechism, the translation of some essential Christian concepts is inevitably rudimentary, as seen from the tract that many transliterations are used, hand in hand with some Buddhist terms. The following extracts are from the French translation of the Chinese version of the catechism:

Le Maître du ciel[...]a créé quatre lieux pour récompenser et punir *hun ling* (les âmes). Le lieu le plus bas s'appelle *yin-fu-no* (*inferno*); celui du milieu, *lin-mo* (*limbos*), celui d'en-haut, *pu-ke-to-lueh* (*purgatorio*). Ces trois lieux se trouvent au milieu de la Terre comme les Pépins d'une poire en son milieu; le quatrième lieu s'appelle *pa-la-i-so* (*paraiso*) [...] l'enfer (*ti-yu*) le plus profond est celui où tombent tous ceux qui, de l'antiquité à nos jours, ont violé les lois du Maître du Ciel et n'ont pas voulu s'amender.<sup>66</sup>

In the text, apart from “*hun-ling*” and “*ti-yu*,” which are the borrowed Buddhist terms and refer to the Buddhist concepts for “soul” and “hell,” the adoptions of transliterations from the Latin are quite extensive: *yin-fu-mo* for *inferno*, *lin-mo* for *limbos*, *pu-ke-luch* for *purgatorio* and *pa-la-i-so* for *paraiso*.

However, the overuse of the transliterations for introducing the foreign terms runs the risk of obscuring the meanings in Chinese, and consequently makes the text a mess of strange signs, which are contrary to Chinese discursive norms. This, in turn, will disrupt their mission strategy of adapting themselves to the Chinese language and customs.

Having realized the defects of the Chinese catechism, Ruggieri made significant improvements in the later version:

天主造有五所以置人之灵魂地.心有四大穴.第一重最深之处乃天主受置古今恶人,及魔鬼之狱也.其次深者古今善人练罪者居之.益善人死,或其罪未赎竟者则置之此所受苦.[...]又次则未进教之孩童居之.孩童未尝为善不宜上天堂受福,亦未尝为恶不宜下地狱受苦.<sup>67</sup>

Le Maître du Ciel a créé pour l'âme de l'homme cinq lieux [different]. Au centre de la Terre se trouvent quatre grands trous. Le plus profond est la prison où le Maître du Ciel jette les méchants de jadis et d'aujourd'hui ainsi que les diables. Le second, moins profond, est celui où logent les hommes bons de jadis et d'aujourd'hui qui y purgent leur crimes [...] Le troisième lieu est pour les enfants qui n'ont pas encore accédé à la doctrine. N'ayant pas encore fait le bien; ils ne peuvent en effet monter au palais céleste y jouir du bonheur. Mais comme ils n'ont pas encore fait le mal, il ne conviendrait pour y subir des supplices.<sup>68</sup>

In this updated version, we can see that all the transliterations are eliminated; the unfamiliar terms have been replaced by the familiar terms, such as *yu* (prison) for *ti-yu*

(*inferno*). However, the Buddhist terms, such as *ling-hun* (soul), *Tianzhu* (the Lord of Heaven), have still been retained.

Despite considerable improvement, the later Chinese version was stopped from transmission after 1593. In the beginning of 1596, an order was given to destroy the printing plate of the Chinese catechism, hence the end of the Ruggieri's version in the Chinese mission.<sup>69</sup>

What was the reason behind this? Gernet suggests that from 1593, Ruggieri's version was no longer relevant to the missionaries, and even contradictory to the accommodation policy implemented.<sup>70</sup> At the time, the Jesuits, with Matteo Ricci as the Superior of the China Mission, learned from their previous experience in China that the Buddhists had a very low status in China's social hierarchy. Like other religious orders, Buddhists were strictly controlled by the imperial power. Only the Confucian literati class truly held the power for governing the country. Through his observations, Matteo Ricci realized the reality and decided to change the mission strategy. In 1592, Ricci discussed the matter with Alexandre Valignano in Macao.<sup>71</sup> In the next year, a new policy of accommodating the Confucian elite class was implemented: they took measures to win the friendship of the literati class, then the sympathy of the court, and eventually the emperor. As China's social system was built on an imperial hierarchy, once the emperor was converted, the whole picture would be changed. For the first step, they would do whatever they could to win over the ruling scholar-official class.<sup>72</sup>

Obviously, *Tianzhu shilu* (the True Record of the Lord of Heaven) contained considerable Buddhist terms, therefore, it would not be useful for the Jesuits in their Chinese mission, as the Chinese translation would impede the new policy of getting

closer to the Confucian elite class. Consequently, the first Chinese translation of the Christian catechism was banned from circulation.

### **Matteo Ricci's Equation of the Christian God with *Tian* and *Shangdi***

Matteo Ricci's new policy of accommodation in the Chinese Empire was to have far reaching significance for China and the Jesuits' mission, and also foreshadowed oppositions in China as well as in Europe.

Born in 1552 in Macerata, Italy, Matteo Ricci entered the Society of Jesus in 1571 when he studied at Roman College, Rome. There, he not only devoted himself to the studies of Theology and Philosophy, but also Mathematics, Cosmology and Astronomy under the guidance of the well-known Father Christopher Clavius. Later his mastery of the scientific subjects proved to be valuable for the Jesuit order in maintaining a strong presence in China, because some of the missionary activities were conducted under the guise of science. Like other Jesuit youths of the time, Ricci, who was driven by his religious zeal to convert those pagans in far-off lands, asked to be sent to Asia, and, hence, began his life-long effort to propagate Christianity. He first worked in 1578 in the Portuguese occupied colony, Goa, then Cochin. In 1582, under the order of Valignano, who had been Ricci's novice-master at Roman College, the Jesuit father arrived at Macao.<sup>73</sup>

Valignano's choice of Ricci was probably due to his confidence in him that the latter would resolutely carry out his set policy to evangelize China, as Valignano had known Ricci in his early missionary activities in the Portuguese occupied colonies.



Because of this choice, it is no exaggeration that Catholic history in China would turn a new page.

Ricci entered mainland China only after he could fluently use Mandarin Chinese, then the official language of the Empire. In 1583, thanks to strenuous efforts, he and several Jesuit fathers were allowed to take up permanent residency in Zhao Qing City. Several years later, after Ruggieria returned to Europe, Ricci was fully responsible for the China Mission as Superior in the order (he remained in China until his death in 1610).

To fit in with the new accommodation policy of attracting the literati class, Matteo Ricci took a series of measures: first, all the missionaries changed their Buddhist garbs to Confucian literati clothes and claimed themselves to be identical to the latter. Ricci realized that since the Chinese literati favoured writing, in lieu of speaking, as the chief way to communicate their ideas, he decided to use this popular form to propagate the Christian faith in the country. In addition, as China fell behind Europe in certain areas of science, Ricci made efforts to spread it as a means to enforce the missionary's role in China's social life.<sup>74</sup>

Consequently, Ricci worked hard to express Christian messages in classical Chinese. In his Chinese writings, Ricci expounds the Christian faith in such a manner that it conforms to his accommodation strategy.

Through his years of missions to disseminate Christianity in China, Matteo Ricci related the relevance of Christianity to Chinese culture. In a letter to Francise Pasio, the Jesuit Vice-provincial in Japan, Matteo Ricci makes his strategy quite clear:

As your Reverence is aware, there are in this realm three sects. The most ancient is that of literati, who now govern China and have always done so. The other two

[Taoism and Buddhism] are idolatries which differ from each other but which are both condemned by the literati. The sect of the literati has little to say about the supernatural, but its moral ideals are almost entirely in accord with our own. Accordingly, I have undertaken in the books I have written to praise them and to use them to confute the other two sects. I have avoided criticizing [the basic Confucian doctrine] but have sought to interpret it where it appears to conflict with our holy faith<sup>75</sup>

By his subversive interpretation of Confucian doctrines, Matteo Ricci began his crusade of Christianizing China with the immediate goal of winning the friendship from the literati and also avoiding conflict with them. To achieve this objective, Matteo Ricci presented Christianity as being as close as possible to Confucianism by emphasizing the shared grounds and interpreting, on his terms, the differences.

*Tianzhu shiyi* (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) is the testimony of Ricci's efforts to bridge Christianity with Confucianism at least in appearance, if not in substance. Written and published in 1604, the book, for the Chinese and missionaries alike, is considered a renewed effort to improve the previous catechism, *Tianzhu shilu* (The True Record of the Lord of Heaven). The new version, which aimed to promote Christianity under the new accommodative policy, was directed at the Confucian scholar-official class (instead of clothing themselves as Buddhist monks from the West, *Xizhen* in Chinese), as revealed in Ricci's journal:

The book [*Tianzhu shiyi*] also contained citations serving its purpose and taken from the ancient Chinese writers; passages which were not merely ornamental, but served to promote the acceptance of this work by the inquiring readers of other Chinese books. It also provided a refutation of all the Chinese religious sects, excepting the one founded on the natural law, as developed by their Prince of Philosophers, Confucius, and adopted by the sect of the literati.<sup>76</sup>

To make Christianity acceptable to the Confucian literati class, Ricci equates the Christian God, *Deus*, to *Shangdi* (the Lord on High or Sovereign on High) and *Tian* (sky or Heaven) in the Confucian canons. His Chinese writing, *Tianzhu shiyi*, elaborates on the similarities in detail.

Let us examine how Ricci does this. First, Ricci adopts some common concepts from the well-known Confucian canons, *The Book of Changes*, *The Book of Poetry*, *The Great Learning*, *The Book of History*, and *The Book of Rites*, such as *Wu Lun* (the Five Human Relations), which refers to the rules observed between King and minister, father and son, and husband and wife; *San Kang* (the Three Bonds), which refers to the relations among different hierarchies. However, he does this not to promote the necessity of maintaining the hierarchical relationships in the Empire, but to establish a practical link between Confucianism and Christianity. Like Confucianism, Christianity has a set of rules governing the divine and human relations. Matteo Ricci asks: “Every state or country has [its own] lord; is it possible that only the universe does not have a lord?”<sup>77</sup> He further points out that the Lord of Heaven (*Tianzhu*) is not only concerned with the West, but also with the East, and everybody should uphold His principles.

Matteo Ricci stresses that since the Lord of Heaven is universal, there will be no national differences; nor will there be language barriers to express the concept:

西士曰:子欲先询所谓始制作天地万物,而时主主宰之者.予谓天下莫著明乎是也.人谁不仰目观天?观天之际,谁不默自叹曰:“斯中必有主之者哉!”夫即天主—吾西国所称“陡斯”是也.

The English translation of his argument is as follows:

The Western scholar says: you (Chinese scholar) wish first to inquire about the creation of heaven, earth and all things and who has constantly exercised the power over them. I would say that there is nothing which is more evident than this: Does anyone not look at the sky? By doing this, who will not sigh: there must surely be a master in the middle of it! Now the master is *Tianzhu* (the Lord of heaven); in our Western country, we term it *Dousi* (*Deus*).<sup>78</sup>

With this universalist view, Matteo Ricci ascertains that *Deus* exists in China as *Tianzhu*. However, he further pushes forward his view by exploiting the deities in the Confucian classics:

西士曰：余虽年入中华，然窃视古经书不怠，但闻古先君子敬恭于天地之上帝，未闻奉太极者。如太极为本上帝—万物之祖，古圣何隐其说乎？

The Western scholar says: although I arrived in China late in life, I have made great efforts to read ancient Chinese books and only found that the learned and virtuous men respected and worshiped *Shangdi* (the Lord on High). But I have never discovered that they paid respects to *Taiji* (Supreme Ultimate). If the Supreme Ultimate is the Lord on High and the origin of all things, why did not the sages of the ancient times keep a record of it.<sup>79</sup>

While rejecting the neo-Confucian concept about the creation of the world, which attributes the creation of the universe to *Taiji*, the Supreme Ultimate, Matteo Ricci reinforces his argument about the Lord of Heaven, which appeared only in ancient times as the Lord on High (*Shangdi*). To back up his argument, he quotes the ancient records from the Confucian classics about the Lord on High:

Our Lord of Heaven is the Lord on High mentioned in the ancient [Chinese] canonical writing (as the following texts show): Quoting Confucius, *The Doctrine of Means* [one of the Confucian canons] says: “the ceremonies of sacrifices of Heaven and Earth are meant for the service of the Lord on High [*Shangdi*].<sup>80</sup>

Then, he cites the Confucius annotated poetry collection, *The Book of Poetry*, which, to Matteo Ricci, records the presence of God in ancient China:

执克武王,无克维烈.不显成康上帝是黄  
The arm of King Wu was full of strength;  
Irresistible was his ardor.  
Greatly illustrious were Ch’eng and K’ang  
Kinged by the Sovereign on High.

于皇来牟,将受厥明,明昭上帝.  
How beautiful are the wheat and the barley,  
Whose bright produce we shall receive!  
The bright and glorious Sovereign on High  
[Will in them give us a good year.]

圣敬日跻,昭假迟迟,上帝是抵.  
And [Tang’s] wisdom and virtue daily advanced.  
Brilliant was the influence of his character [on Heaven] for long,  
And the Sovereign on high appointed him  
To be a model to the nine regions.

维此文王,小心翼翼,昭事上帝.  
This King Wen, watchfully and reverently, with entire  
Intelligence served the Sovereign on High.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, Matteo Ricci does not hesitate to render the Christian God *Deus* into *Tian*, which not only means the sovereign power of ancient Chinese memorial services, but also refers to the material sky, as in the later period of ancient China, the term *Shangdi* was gradually replaced by the term *Tian*, both of which represent the same entity.<sup>82</sup> In the Confucian canons, considerable documents record ancient people's rituals for respecting and worshipping *Tian*. Such phrases as “serve Heaven” (*shi tian*), “respect and fear Heaven” (*jingtian and weitian*) were still in currency in the Ming Dynasty.

However, Matteo Ricci insists that in ancient China, people did not worship the material sky, but Heaven. In a like manner, he also draws the expressions related to *Tian* extensively from *The Book of History*, which, for him, also denote *Deus*.

乃命于帝庭,数佑四方.

And moreover he was appointed in the hall of the Sovereign to extend his aid to the four quarters of the empire.<sup>83</sup>

Ricci claims: “the fact that the Sovereign on High has his hall makes it obvious that the speaker is not referring to the physical blue sky.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, he argues:

If one thinks more deeply on the matter and explains the Sovereign on High in terms of Heaven, then you may do as you suggest, because Heaven basically “one great” [in Chinese]...the blue sky which has form is in nine layers ranging from the highest to the lowest. How, then can it be the same as He who is unique and supremely honored? When we investigate the Sovereign on High we find that He is without form; how, then, can it be called by the name which applies to something with form?<sup>85</sup>

In his letter, Matteo Ricci explains why he translates *Deus* as *Shangdi* and *Tian* in the Chinese context:

In ancient times, they (the Chinese) followed a natural law as faithfully as in our own countries. For 1500 years, this people hardly practiced the cult of the idols at all. In fact, in most of ancient books of the men of letter--those that have authority--they worship only heaven and earth and the master of both.<sup>86</sup>

However, the fact is that, contradictory to Ricci's statement, most Chinese people were non-Christians at that point in time. How could it be possible that ancient people worshiped God and left no trace at all, not even a written record?

This is not a challenge to Ricci. He argues that the ancient Chinese used to worship a supreme deity and venerated spirits of the mountains and rivers, but:

Since corrupt human nature, unaided by divine Grace, sinks ever lower, these unfortunate people little by little lost their light, and they come to be so...of those who have not escaped idolatry, there are few who have not fallen into atheism.<sup>87</sup>

Ricci further explains why there are no historical records about the loss of the faith of the Chinese. He attributes it to the "Great Book Burning" in the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.). During his tyrannical reign, the Qin Emperor ordered all the books deemed to be dangerous to his rule to be burned, especially the philosophical works of different schools. Matteo Ricci claims that historical records of the loss of the Christian faith might have been destroyed altogether with the philosophical writings and other documents.

In addition, as many alterations of historical records occurred in ancient times for facilitating the absolute rule of the emperors, Matteo Ricci speculates that the records of practicing Christianity in China were also likely altered, and hence the Chinese could not keep up with the Christian ties their forefathers had established. In the West, however, this did not take place, as Christianity was observed, until then, unaffected.

Despite his seemingly logical arguments about the existence of Christianity in ancient times, and his justification of the equation of the Christian God to *Shangdi* and *Tian*, Matteo Ricci had little concrete evidence to support his statements. As a matter of fact, the emperor's efforts to burn the books failed and most of the so-called evil books survived the tyrannical reign, such as, the Confucian canons and philosophical works. As for the alterations of historical records, Matteo Ricci's speculation seems quite impossible. Given that the Confucian canons containing the presence of God, as Matteo Ricci claims, could be passed down from one generation to another, it is quite safe to say that there would be no possibility for anyone to alter the records about the existence of Christianity in history, nor did it seem to be necessary. Matteo Ricci's analogy, therefore, appears to be purely speculative, hence doubtful.

Why did Ricci have to do this? We believe that Ricci's real motive behind his impossible speculation was to bridge the gap between Christianity and Confucianism, so that the former might appear to be relevant to the powerful literati class. He intended to impress upon the elite class that what he preached was, in substance, the same as what the ancient Chinese believed, and his task was to help the Chinese restore the Christian faith. In this way, he could legitimize his role as God's messenger to the Chinese and consequently converted them in his own right.



Behind his arguments, we could see where his true purpose lies: by his deliberate interpretations of Chinese myths and rites, which were obscured by time, Ricci could subvert Confucian doctrines and color the principles of Confucianism with Christianity, that is, Christianize Confucianism, so that the latter would be assimilated completely.

However, what Matteo Ricci did was not without risk: if the literati class understood Christianity as based on Confucian principles, then the result would be the opposite: Christianity would be subject to the literati's Confucian interpretations. This proved to be the case when Ricci's approach was seriously questioned by the mendicant friars in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and then triggered the battle of the "Controversy of Rites" between the Jesuits, the friars and the Chinese emperor.

But, this was not of immediate danger to Matteo Ricci—he first had to take a foothold in the elite class through his translation and interpretation, which would let them see the relevance of Christianity to their value system. By doing so, Matteo Ricci would stand in a good position to accommodate the ruling class.

Moreover, we must also understand that when Matteo Ricci equated the Christian God to *Tian* and *Shangdi*, on one hand, he could shorten the distance between Confucianism and Christianity; on the other hand, since he only linked God with the deity of ancient times, he could easily distance himself from some of the neo-Confucian doctrines that were considered contradictory to Christianity. Ricci, thus, argued that the original doctrines of Confucianism were corrupted by Buddhist influences since the Han Dynasty (206B.C.-220 A.D), and what he preached was the true source of Confucianism, which, in essence, was Christianity.

Matteo Ricci had enough reason to do this, because the Confucian classics are the collection of the ancient myths, rituals, histories, and poetry, annotated and commented Confucius. When these records were passed down from one generation to another, their contexts were gradually obscured and subject to different interpretations. In Chinese history, many schools of thought tried to interpret the records in their own right. Especially in the Ming Dynasty, the neo-Confucian School (created in the Song Dynasty (960-1127)), tried to revitalize Confucianism in a new social condition and give essentially moral Confucian philosophy a metaphysical dimension by attributing the creation of all things to *Taiji*, the Ultimate Supreme. Because of the ambiguous nature of the Chinese classics, Matteo Ricci could interpret Confucianism in his favor.

In a letter to an associate, Matteo Ricci frankly admitted that he had taken advantage of the obscured Confucian canons:

I make every effort to turn our way the ideas of the leader of the sect of the literati, Confucius, by interpreting in our favor things which he left ambiguous in his writings. In this way our fathers gain great favors with the literati who do not adore the idol.<sup>88</sup>

In order to gain ground for the Christian faith in a cultural background fundamentally different from his own, Matteo Ricci was forced to convey the Christian term *Deus* in such a way. He did this not without compromise, because he had to relate the Christian God to the Confucian concepts, so that he could establish an alliance with the Confucian literati class. However, if this alliance were made, Christianity would be subject to powerful Confucian discourse and Ricci would consequently have repeated the

experience of what the Nestorians had gone through in China; Christianity would have been completely assimilated by Chinese culture.

However, what lay behind Ricci's equation of the Christian God to *Tian* and *Shangdi* was his desire to uproot Confucianism and convert the Chinese pagans, as he expressed this clearly in his journal.<sup>89</sup> In order to achieve his goal of conversion, Ricci reinterpreted the Chinese classics and transformed the signifiers of the target language, *Shangdi* and *Tian*, to the Christian signified, *Deus*. With his translations relevant to the literati class, Ricci wanted to convince them that what he preached was not contrary to their Confucian beliefs. But, once the scholar-officials believed in the God of ancient times, they would be, in essence, converted to Christianity. Ultimately, with his ingenious interpretation, Matteo Ricci desired to subvert the Chinese classics and bring Confucianism under the power of Christianity.

Although Matteo Ricci took great pains to equate the Christian God to *Shangdi* and *Tian*, the Christian God is fundamentally different from the Confucian deities *Shangdi* and *Tian*.

According to the recently published monograph, *Zhongguo zongjiao tongshi* (A General History of China's Religions),<sup>90</sup> *Shangdi* first appeared in the Shang Dynasty (1800-1400 B.C) and was regarded as the god of gods. *Shangdi* is a combination of two separate words in Chinese: "shang" and "di." The former refers to the upper region or sky and the latter denotes ruler, or king. Before the archeological excavation conducted in 1898, because of the lack of material evidence, a lot of speculations had been made on part of the Chinese and missionaries on the nature of China's religious history in pre-Confucian times. The excavation finds show that in the Shang Dynasty, the people not

only adored the god of heaven, but also the gods of the earth, ghosts, spirits and their own ancestors. They believed that the gods controlled the sky and earth, and everything depended on the will of these deities. Unsure of their future or fortunes, the people of the ancient Shang race tried to learn the will of the gods by casting special dice, by which they believed that the gods would reveal to them the secrets they wanted to know, so that they could avoid misfortunes or disasters. Among the gods, *Shangdi* was the highest rank of the deities, who governed the nature, such as wind, cloud and thunder, agriculture, wars, fortune and miseries of the kings and ordinary people. The lesser gods, such as the gods of the river, mountain and lake, governed the things on the earth. The ancient Shang people also believed that they could not communicate directly with *Shangdi*; but through their dead ancestors, they could get their desires or wishes across to the highest deity with their ceremonies dedicated to their forefathers.

From the above monograph by the religious researchers, Zongjian Mou and Jian Zhang, we might conclude that the deities invented by the ancient Chinese are more like that which existed in Greek mythology. In a certain sense, *Shangdi* shares similar status with Zeus, rather than with the Christian God. What Matteo Ricci demonstrates as the evidence of the existence of the Christian God in ancient China in fact appears to be the ceremonies dedicated to *Shangdi* by the kings or their subjects for a victory in war, or a bumper harvest.

Also, in *China and the Christian Impact*, Gernet defines the conceptual differences between God in the Bible, and *Tian* and *Shangdi* in the Chinese context:

The Christian faith relates to a personal and transcendent God of pure spirit and it sets up an opposition between the earth below, where man plays out his eternal

destiny, and Beyond, which is totally incommensurate with it. In contrast, the Heaven of the Chinese is a concept in which secular and religious aspects merge. Whereas for the Christians, the word “heaven” is simply a metaphor to refer to God and his angels, and paradise and its elect, for the Chinese, the same term has a multitude of meanings. It expresses an order that is both divine and natural, both social and cosmic.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the apparent incommensurability between the Christian God and *Tian* and *Shangdi*, the equation drawn by Matteo Ricci under his accommodation policy attracted the attention of the Chinese literati class.

*Tianzhu shiyi* was praised as an excellent Chinese work with an elegant style that conformed to Confucian literati writing norms.<sup>92</sup> Because of his impressive writing style and active participation in introducing sciences to China, Matteo Ricci did win the friendship from the literati class and the sympathy of the emperor, who allowed the Jesuits to stay in Beijing, the capital of the Empire. Also because of the missionary policy implemented, some Chinese literati, including the Grand Secretary of the Rites, Xu Guandqi (baptized as Paul Xu, 1562-1633), were converted.

However, some literati also realized what Matteo Ricci truly intended to do. One of the officials, Huang Wendo said: “I used to think that they had come to China through love of *Tao* [That is, our moral and philosophical ideas]. Now I know that they stole it only to betray.”<sup>93</sup> Another scholar warned that the Jesuits were trying to “undermine the foundation of our empire.”<sup>94</sup>

Unimpressed by Matteo Ricci’s efforts, another Jesuit father spoke of Ricci’s method negatively, though he might have largely ignored the context of the China Mission:

What does it matter whether or not the ancient Chinese knew God? ... We are here to proclaim the Holy Gospel, not to become apostles of Confucius.<sup>95</sup>

Even Matteo Ricci's associates cast doubt on his translation of Christian ideas: "in the passages where they appear to speak of our God and his angels, they are merely aping the truth [...]"<sup>96</sup>

Despite the mixed responses, the impact of the Riccian line of accommodation and translation was to be felt significantly by both the missionaries and the Chinese. We must understand that the China Mission was started during the Catholics' campaign to minimize the influence brought out by the Reformation. Matteo Ricci's guiding principle for the Jesuit missionaries in China, the accommodation mission policy, challenged the spirit of the Council of Trent against the Reformation, and the conceptual incommensurability of the terms involved would push the Jesuits onto the dangerous ground of approaching syncretism.

As stipulated by the Council of Trent, the unified liturgy, the distinction between laity and clergy and the use of the words and sentences of the sacred Scripture, among other things, were imposed on the clergy: unified liturgy must be observed without exception, no priests were allowed to wear layman's clothes. In addition, the Council of Trent regulated the use of the Sacred Scripture: "The words and sentences of sacred Scripture" are forbidden to be "turned and twisted to all sorts of profane uses, to wit, to things scurrilous, fabulous, impious and diabolic incantations, sorceries."<sup>97</sup>

If the Jesuits in China implemented the rules laid out by the Council of Trent, the policy of accommodation would have been impossible. What was even more impossible was their translation of the Christian term to a largely Confucian value dominated empire

in Chinese terms. However, the reality was that the missionaries not only wore Buddhist robes, then the official clothing of the scholar-officials, but also showed tolerance to some Chinese customs, which were later considered idolatry. What is more, Matteo Ricci tried to link Christianity with Confucianism by equating the Christian God to *Shangdi* and *Tian*. The very equation would lead Christianity to syncretism, an act that was considered acceptable in China (as evidenced by the Chinese assimilation of a largely foreign religion, Buddhism from India, absorbing it into the established cultural system),<sup>98</sup> but was opposed by the Catholic Church: any act of synthesizing Christianity with other religions was a betrayal of the faith in the one God.<sup>99</sup>

Known as the Christian soldiers, why did the Jesuits have to violate the order established by the Catholic authorities? If, in Xavier's time, the Council of Trent was still in session, it is understandable that the missionaries could not have been bound by a definite direction. But, during and after Matteo Ricci's tenure as Superior, the Jesuits should have observed the rules of the Council. Nonetheless, the Jesuits did not comply with them. Why? We must understand the Jesuit missionary policy in light of the reality of China.

As analyzed in the main body of the text, the accommodation policy was conceived under the following circumstances: the inexistence of military occupation, China's refusal to open its door to the outside, its military might and economic superiority, and above all its sophisticated culture. The mission policy, hence, was designed not according to theological considerations, but practical ones. The missionaries' consensus was that only by adapting themselves to Chinese culture, could the Jesuits have the opportunity to convert the Chinese. Therefore, in terms of the evangelical translation, it was the cultural

aspect of power that made the missionaries present Christianity by using a target text based translation strategy, with an aim to first win the friendship of the dominant scholar-official class, then to convert the whole empire.

Later missionaries of other Catholic factions basically considered the Jesuit adaptation to Chinese culture and customs, especially the translation of the Christian God as *Tian* and *Shangdi*, as contrary to the spirit of the Council of Trent. But as long as they were the only Catholic order that monopolized the evangelical activities in China, they were relatively safe for the time being. However, their mission policy and translation of the term foreshadowed their failure in China, both from within and without.

### **Nicco Longobardi's Treatise on the Term Issue**

Since the policy of accommodation was initiated, the Jesuit mission progressed steadily, though not without frustration and setbacks. As we mentioned earlier, Matteo Ricci's reinterpretation of Confucianism enabled him to both subvert the Confucian doctrines and accommodate the literati class. But at the same time, his translation could invite backlash if the Chinese understood the messages on their own terms. This was exactly what some Jesuits were concerned about, especially after the death of Matteo Ricci.

After a solid missionary foundation in the Empire was laid out, the Jesuits desired to purify the Christian doctrines, as they suspected that the Chinese converts had misunderstood the messages they had tried to convey. In fact, what they wanted to do was to make the Chinese converts correctly understand the Christian messages, without



affecting the set policy of accommodation. The safest and perhaps most crucial thing for them was to fight an intellectual battle to put right the supposedly erroneous neo-Confucian metaphysical tenets from within their own circle. Naturally, the Riccian line of term equivalent became the focus of the dispute, because it involved the contest of intellectual power of translating the Chinese pagans or of being translated by the Confucians.

The translation issue was not raised until Nicco Longobardi (1565-1655) succeeded Matteo Ricci as the Superior of the China Mission. Though he still continued to carry out the policy designed by his predecessor, who foresaw the eventual success of Christianizing China, Longobardi was, in principle, suspicious of the legitimacy of Matteo Ricci's translation of the Christian God into *Tian* and *Shangdi*. He suspected that what the missionaries intended to preach was misunderstood by the Chinese converts and the Confucian literati.

According to Longobardi's account,<sup>100</sup> the translation controversy was also kindled by the Jesuits from Japan. The missionaries, who were expelled from Japan in 1614-1615, returned to the Portuguese-occupied port city of Macao and posed a series of questions on the Chinese equivalents of God, which had caused confusion among the converts in Japan. As the Japanese converts could have access to the Chinese writings of some missionaries, they had made comparisons between the common terms in the Confucian canons and the Jesuits' Chinese writings, which were supposed to denote the Christian God. They had felt greatly puzzled because they could not distinguish the differences between the Christian God and the Confucian deities.

Though the translation issue had previously been settled through an intensive discussion in Macao in 1600, and *Tian* and *Shangdi* had been approved henceforth as the acceptable equivalents for *Deus*, when the Jesuits from Japan came to Macao, they brought up the problem they had encountered there.

As mentioned earlier, the Jesuits' predecessor, Xavier, had translated *Deus* into Japanese with a strong Buddhist connotation and later caused misunderstanding among the Japanese converts. The Jesuit missionaries had decided that only the Latin word *Deus* in Japanese pronunciation "*Deusu*" be used for the missionary activities.<sup>101</sup> However, the transliteration of the term had a serious impact on their proselytizing efforts in Japan. Because of its foreignness, this term made many Japanese converts believe that Christianity was a foreign religion.<sup>102</sup> This, in a larger sense, alienated the missionaries from Japanese society and consequently caused their expulsion, as anti-foreign sentiments were high in Japan at the time.<sup>103</sup>

Based on their experience in Japan, the returned Jesuits believed that the Asians (the Chinese and Japanese alike) were atheists, and more measures had to be taken to infuse purer Christian messages into the converts in the two countries. Consequently, they raised the question of the legitimacy of the term *Deus* for *Tian*, *Shangdi* and even *Tianzhu*, and later they rejected all the existing Chinese equivalents for the Christian God.

After he received the questions concerning the term from Francesco Pasio, the highest superior in Asia, Longobardi formally started researching the translation. First he embarked on internal discussions among his Jesuit brethren. When the discussions were conducted among the missionaries, the Jesuit fathers were divided by two opposing views: one representing the supporters of Ricci's translation, and the other representing the

opponents of the Riccian line. Strangely enough, being the mission leader and successor of Matteo Ricci, Longobardi took the line opposing Ricci's Chinese translation.

The questions are: Why was translation such an important and controversial issue for them? Given that there had been no controversy over the translation of the term among the Jesuit missionaries since Xavier, why did it become problematic then?

For the Ricci supporters, the term issue formed an integral part of his policy of accommodation implemented in China for its conversion. If the translation was denied, it would mean the end of accommodation, and their mission in China would be put in peril. Diego Pantoja (1517-1628) and his associates did what they could to safeguard the Riccian line of accommodation. They repeated exactly what Matteo Ricci had said, perhaps more explicitly.<sup>104</sup> For Matteo Ricci's adversaries, the translation was not acceptable, as Longobardi pointed out:

But F.Sabatinus and I, with several others, were of opinion we could not thus be safe and easy, in regard the learned Chinese Christians generally suit their sentiments to ours, and explicate their doctrines according as they think corresponds with our holy faith, without regarding of how great consequence it is to have the truth of these controversies brought to light, and that nothing be said which may have the least shadow of falsehood or fiction.<sup>105</sup>

Longobardi insisted on bringing the controversies to light and on defending the purity of the Christian faith. He wrote a long article with a lengthy title "A Short Answer concerning the Controversy about Xang Ti [*Shangdi*] Tien Xin, Ling Hoen (that is, the King of the upper Region, Spirits, and rational Soul assigned by the Chinese) and other Chinese Names and Terms; to clear which of them may be us'd by The Christians of

these Parts. Directed to the Fathers of the Residences in China, that they may peruse it, and then send their opinion concerning it to the F. Visitor at Macao” (briefed as “A Short Answer” hereafter).

Longobardi’s treatise was written after he had done extensive research among his brethren, the Chinese literati and converts. He also borrowed some ideas to strengthen his arguments from the other four treatises written by his associates, who shared his views about the terminological issue.

In the treatise, Longobardi first builds his argument against the conceptual framework of neo-Confucianism in the book entitled *Xingli Daquan*, which had been compiled by neo-Confucian scholars in the fifteenth century. But Longobardi mistook the book as two separate writings, one of which had been written more than two thousand years ago.<sup>106</sup>

Quite different from Matteo Ricci, who tried to distinguish the ancient texts annotated by Confucius and the neo-Confucian doctrines, Longobardi views the Confucian doctrines as a consistent system and sees no necessity to distinguish between the two.

He first quotes from the Confucian commentaries, a Platonic-style dialogue collection between Confucius and his students, about death and spirits. In *Lun Yu*, being asked about spirits, Confucius says that in order to govern the people, it is highly necessary to make them honor the spirits and at the same time keep a distance from them. Regarding death, Confucius takes an ambiguous stance and says that he could not know about death if he does not know enough about life. In another commentary collection, when asked about the definitions of spirits, soul, and life after death, Confucius makes an

abstract rule by saying that things which are within a fixed position may be doubted, but things contradictory to this, that is, the invisible world, must not be touched upon and should be left alone. Confucius is not willing to talk about the spiritual things, because for him, the people's fear of spiritual things could be used to establish an order among them. If they know the secrets about them, social order would be destabilized.

Since Confucius is only concerned with things that have a fixed position, that is, the visible world, Longobardi argues that the Confucian literati "have their hearts darkened and their eyes closed" and might not see anything beyond this visible world. Therefore, he concludes that Confucius has led the people into atheism, "the world of evils."<sup>107</sup> Longobardi then analyzes the atheist elements from the metaphysical tenets of neo-Confucianism.

Longobardi states that Confucianism, rather, neo-Confucianism, was the official philosophy of the learned sect. For those Confucians, all things in this world proceed from *Li*, which can be linked to the Scholastic term "*materia prima*," undetermined and passive being. From *Li* flow the virtues of pity, justice, religion or worship and other spiritual matters. Thus, all things, physical or spiritual, proceed from the same origin, that is, *Li*. After some mutations, *Li* becomes a circle or finite globe, which is called *Taiji*, the Supreme Ultimate (compared with "*materia proxima*"). *Taiji* is consisted of two opposing forces, *Yin* (negative) and *Yang* (positive). Longobardi stresses:

According to this sect, when the years of the world's continuance are at an end, this universe will expire, with all that is in it, all return to its first principle from whence it flowed; so that nothing will remain but only the pure *Li*, accompanied by its helping-mate *kie[qi]*. Then the same *Li* shall produce another universe after same manner .<sup>108</sup>

Since all things proceed from *Li*, the world has a beginning and an end, therefore, all spirits will perish when the universe expires, and again *Li* will produce a universe. Thus, all spiritual things are posterior or inferior to *Li* or *Tiaji*. Longobardi concludes:

Hence it is that the doctor P.V.Puen Tu said, that *Xang Ti* [*Shangdi*] was the son and creature of *Taiji* and the same must be said of our *Tianzhu*, that is, of our God, if he was the same as *Xang Ti*. It evidently appears then, that what the Chinese conceived under this name *Xang Ti*, cannot be our God.<sup>109</sup>

Longobardi adds that the Chinese, like other heathen, assume that heaven and earth move surely and orderly, they subsequently guess that there would be an individual author controlling them; they call this author *zhu*, that is, lord, or *zhuzai*, master. They think that they could receive great benefits if they worship him with numerous rituals or sacrifices. The Confucian canon, *The Book of Rites*, records the sacrifices given to the spirits. The emperors Yao and Shun, the legendary rulers of the beginning of the Chinese Empire, set down four sorts of sacrifices to spirits, including those to “heaven and its spirits,” “*Shangdi* (the Lord of Heaven),” “river and mountain,” and other spirits.

In addition, Longobardi notes that, as asserted by the Chinese, the spirits of heaven, mountain, earth or other things, are lifeless: without understanding and liberty. Those who do well will be rewarded naturally; those who do ill will be punished. This would lead to the materialist conclusion that “the affairs of this world are not governed by a supreme providence, but by chance, or according to the course of natural causes.”<sup>110</sup>

For Longobardi, the Chinese are not only atheists, but also materialists; they have no idea of what the true Christian God is, just like other heathen, such as the Greeks and

Egyptians. Therefore, any equation of God with *Shangdi* and *Tian* is misleading and extremely dangerous. Longobardi further supports his conclusion by his interviews with the Chinese literati and converts.

For Doctor Puen Tu, *Tianzhu* (the Lord of Heaven), who has some resemblance to the king of the upper region (*Shangdi*), could be a “creature of *Taiji*.” For Doctor Cien Lin Vu, a friend of the Jesuit fathers, God was like their Confucius — he got the idea when he listened to the discussions about the nature of the true God. As for Doctor Michael, he saw the similarities between God and Confucius: “both legislators were the same thing as heaven and the first principle.” Doctor Sui To-Ko was even more positive that only *Li* or *Taiji* was the substance of the world; the king of the upper region and all their spirits were the “only operative virtue of things.” Doctor Li Sung To told Longobardi that there would be no reward, nor punishment after man’s death. He said positively that he had never heard of God, heaven, hell, or the like in this sect.<sup>111</sup>

Being asked by Longobardi, Doctor Xu Guangqi, the Grand Secretary of the Rites, answered the question quite frankly that he did not believe that *Shangdi* could be the Christian God, nor did he believe that the ancient and modern Chinese people had any knowledge of God. But since the Jesuit fathers, with good motives, termed *Shangdi* their God, the Chinese literati made no objection to it. Another convert, Doctor Leo, confirmed Longobardi’s inquiry that all Confucian literati were atheists, and they built their opinions on the later comments of the Confucian canons, not on the ancient original texts themselves. However, he and other converts believed that to comply with Chinese tradition, they should “stick to the old Chinese doctrines,” and not give too much thought to the metaphysics of the neo-Confucian School.<sup>112</sup>

After having interviewed some Chinese literati and converts, Longobardi has reached the same conclusion: the Chinese are both atheists and materialists.

However, Longobardi's treatise, largely academic in nature, put those Riccian liners, and the Jesuit missionaries as a whole, in a very unfavorable position. As noted earlier in our thesis, Matteo Ricci translated the Christian God *Deus* into *Shangdi* and *Tian* and tried to make Christianity pertinent to the Confucian literati. But Ricci also faced the danger of mingling the Christian God with the Confucian deity *Shangdi*, which would lead to religious syncretism. However, Ricci did not intend to dilute Christianity by the translation; instead, he separated the ancient Confucian texts from the modern versions. By his interpretation, Father Ricci Christianized the ancient texts. But, as the target language receptors, the Chinese literati seemed to accept Matteo Ricci's translation on their own terms. This seemingly made his efforts to subvert Confucianism impossible. As confirmed in Longobardi's treatise, the Chinese understanding of Ricci's translation was almost against the missionary's intention. For Longobardi, this was quite counterproductive and needed to be addressed seriously. The only remedy was that all three equivalents for the Christian God, including *Tianzhu*, be rejected. In 1663, he insisted that the Chinese Christians should pray to *Dousi*, the Chinese transliteration of *Deus*.<sup>113</sup>

If the missionaries had rejected Matteo Ricci's translation, the link between Christianity and the Confucian literati would have been definitely cut off, and the policy of accommodating the elite class would have been revoked and replaced with a less tolerant one. This would have destabilized the existing base for their missions in China, thus jeopardizing their entire proselytizing efforts. Hence, the translation issue was



crucial for the Jesuits to maintain their presence in the Empire, which was the prerequisite for the eventual conversion of the pagan nation.

The Jesuits understood the importance of the issue. They held quite a number of discussions to settle their disagreements. In 1627-1628, one of the most important meetings was held in Jading, near Shanghai. Many arguments of pro and con were poured out, addressing the term issue. In the beginning, the party opposing the Riccian line won. But in 1633-1634, the adherents of Ricci gained the overall support, and the terms *Shangdi*, *Tian* and *Tianzhu* were allowed to be used in their religious services, though it was also advised that special instructions be given to the converts in order to distinguish the connotations of the former two terms. In addition, to keep the term dispute an internal matter, the records of the debates and discussions were destroyed and few treatises survived the fires.<sup>114</sup>

Longobardi's treatise, written for internal discussion, provoked heated debates among the Jesuits and had serious consequences for the later missions. As the adherents of the Riccian line gained majority support, Longobardi's opposition to the term issue had to be silenced. Consequently, his treatise, which was not intended for publication, but only for internal circulation in order to improve the Jesuits' efforts in China, was ordered to be burned by the Vice-provincial of Japan, who also took charge of the China Mission. With this, the set policy of accommodation continued, and the China mission was pushed progressively forward.

## The End of Translation

The discussions and debates on the term issue among the Jesuits lasted for decades, starting with the arrival of the missionaries from Japan to the official approval of the terms, *Tian* and *Shangdi*. The final result demonstrated the Jesuits' overall approval of their mission strategy laid out by Matteo Ricci, which was based on their realistic understanding of the Chinese context and their desire to establish a practical link with the literati class. It was their consensus that, only by doing so, could they establish a foothold in China, and only then could they convert the Chinese, step by step.

At the same time, from Longobardi's treatise, we could see that though his fear of the Christian messages being assimilated by Confucianism was real, the conclusion in his treatise contained dangerous messages, which would cause an overall negation of the policy within the religious order.

In the evangelical activities, however, Longobardi himself did not oppose an engagement with Chinese ideas and values, nor did he take any concrete actions against the policy of accommodation. It seems to us that what Longobardi stated in his treatise was quite contrary to what he truly did. How could we understand this? As Paul Rule points out, although the internal disputes existed, there was no suggestion of disagreements among the Jesuits with the established mission policy, nor was there any opposition to accommodating the literati class. Longobardi's treatise could only be seen as a doctrinal alert to his comrades.<sup>115</sup> Despite this, Longobardi, after all, failed to appreciate Matteo Ricci's subversive interpretation and translation of the Confucian canons.

It was only with the arrival of the mendicant friars from the Philippines and the New World that the Riccian line was seriously questioned and challenged. The term issue and the ceremonies for paying respects to ancestors and Confucius by the Chinese Christian converts became the focus of the so-called “Controversies of Rites.” The disputes eventually escalated to an open struggle between the Chinese Emperor Kangxi, and the mendicant friars and the Pope’s envoys over their power over the Chinese converts. The essentially religious term question was contested through the exercises of political power, which were intended on the part of other Catholic hard-liners to displace Chinese culture and customs, and on the part of the imperial power to subdue the attempts. The term issue and the controversies over the Chinese rites had serious consequences, which not only discredited the Jesuits, but also jeopardized the Christian mission in China as a whole.

The controversies were triggered only after the Dominicans and Franciscans landed and began preaching in Fu Jian province, the coastal province of East China. In 1585, Pope Gregory XIII approved the request by the King of Portugal to grant the Jesuits exclusive rights to preach in China and Japan after the King promised that a uniform mission method be taken. However, the restriction of other religious orders’ entry into China was gradually lifted. Missionaries, who preached in the countries occupied by Spain, were allowed to engage in their evangelical activities in China. Subsequently, the Dominicans arrived in China in 1631 and the Franciscans in 1633, both of whom were headquartered in Fu Jian province.<sup>116</sup>

Paul Rule suggests that the new religious orders from the Philippines and the New World inevitably brought with them different views and approaches to evangelize China,

which had been tested and proved to be successful in the colonies of Spain.<sup>117</sup> As the evangelical environment in China was quite different from that of the Spanish colonies, the mendicant missionaries were to put themselves in direct conflict with, not only the Chinese, but also with the Jesuits. At the beginning, the mendicant friars found the local customs largely contrary to their Christian values and suspected that those Chinese Christians converted by the Jesuit Fathers worshipped idols.

First, the friars found that the Chinese converts worshipped their ancestors by burning paper money and laying food before their tombs as if they were living gods. Later, they also noticed that the Chinese literati class worshipped their master, Confucius, in the so-called *Miao* (temple), where Confucius' statue was set up and sacrifices were offered. Greatly shocked, the friars moved quickly to forbid the Chinese converts from worshipping their ancestors and Confucius. But, the Chinese converts were deeply hurt, saying that if they did not attend the ceremonies for their ancestors, they would alienate themselves from the rest of their families and their relatives, hence damaging their family ties. What was more, when the magistrates heard of this, they would regard them as not being filial to their parents and ancestors, and they would be punished for it. As for the ceremony for Confucius, it was considered part and parcel of Chinese culture and values, on which the state ideology and power hierarchy were based. However, the mendicant friars believed that Confucius was worshipped by the scholar officials as an idol and false god. It would violate their principle if the ceremony dedicated by the literati class to their master would not be banned.<sup>118</sup>

However, this would bring serious consequences upon the literati class: not only did the literati have to cut themselves off from the ruling class, but they also put

themselves in a very dangerous position, as rebels against the state ideology and inherited cultural values. Moreover, the friars' action would bring themselves into a head-on conflict with the ruling Chinese literati class, thus making their mission in China impossible.

The mendicant friars did not realize the consequences arising from their oppositions to Chinese culture — they were predominated by their religious zeal that with their aggressive efforts, the Chinese converts would cast off their idols and only believe in one God, and, therefore, the purity of Christianity could be maintained.

Apparently, this led away from the policy of accommodation by the Jesuits. In their missionary activities, the Jesuits showed great respect for and understanding of, the native customs practiced by the Confucian literati and ordinary people. Matteo Ricci explained that the rites performed to ancestors by the Chinese were just the Chinese way of showing their respects. He wrote, “It seems to be the best way of testifying their love to their dear departed”<sup>119</sup> and it was instituted for the benefit of the living, rather than for that of the dead. As for the literati's ceremony for Confucius, Ricci explained that in a hall, they offered Confucius dishes of food in a symbolic gesture to thank their master for the doctrines in his writings, with which they acquired their literary degrees and got official positions as magistrates. Since they did not recite prayers, nor did they ask any favors of Confucius, the ceremony for paying respect to Confucius had nothing to do with idol-worshipping.<sup>120</sup> For Matteo Ricci, the ceremonies for ancestors and Confucius alike were only civil in nature and contained almost nothing contrary to Christianity, in particular no elements of idolatry.

However, the Jesuit tolerance for the native customs was seriously challenged by the mendicant friars. After being refused to “join together with them in creating a single body or army to attack idolatry in order to convert the country,”<sup>121</sup> they referred the disputes to Rome.

In 1643, Juan Bautista de Morales, one of the mendicants, who had arrived in China and been driven out in 1638, presented “Seventeen Questions” to the Vatican. Most of his seventeen questions were concerned with the customs observed in China: The rituals performed during the Chinese New Year, the praying for the gods, protectors of the Chinese, in the temples, the ceremonies paid to Confucius as a saint or god, the memorial service to the dead parents and ancestors, and the tablet set up by the Chinese on which their grandparents’ and ancestors’ names were written to preserve their memories.<sup>122</sup>

For two years, the Propaganda Fide of Rome ordered most of the customs Morales mentioned to be forbidden absolutely for the Chinese converts; no tolerance of any kind was allowed. Thus, the Vatican supported Morales and dismissed the Jesuits’ approach in China.

The Jesuits immediately sent their representative to Rome to present their case against Morales’ accusations. Martino Martini, on behalf of the Jesuits in China, answered Morales’ charges by presenting four questions. He argued that the literati’s honoring of Confucius in the halls, not in the temples, was “civil and political, just for civil honor.”<sup>123</sup> Martini explained in detail that, of the three ways of paying respects to the dearly departed, none involved any superstitious ceremonies.

The learned Martini convinced the Vatican with his argument, and consequently the Sacred Congregation ruled that the literati and ordinary Chinese converts could attend the ceremonies honoring Confucius and their dead, as long as they did not do anything superstitious.<sup>124</sup> Thanks to Martini's powerful argument, the Jesuits won and could continue the Riccian line. However, the controversy had just begun. Domingo Fernandez de Navarrete (1618-86) added another issue to the controversy, that is, the term question.

As a Dominican missionary, Navarrete was a determined opponent of the Jesuits' strategy to accommodate the literati class. Before he came to China, he had been a missionary in the Philippines and was widely known as an expert in the Tagalog dialect. It was he who brought the rites controversy to the attention of the Europeans, with his book *Tratados historico, politico, ethicos y religiosos de la monarchia de China* (An Account of the Empire of China, Historical, Political, Moral and Religious) in 1676.

There was nothing special in the book, as it was only concerned with his perceptions about China's political, historical and ethical conditions. In the book, however, was inserted Longobardi's treatise, which had survived the burning and somehow got into Navarrete's hands. There was nothing as powerful and lethal as Longobardi's treatise to convince his European readers and the Holy authority in the Vatican that the Jesuits in China were preaching a false doctrine to their Chinese converts.

In his commentaries about Longobardi's treatise on the term issue, Navarrete first accuses Matteo Ricci of sticking the Christian God into the ancient Confucian text. He says that if Christianity were practiced thousands of years ago in China, there would be no need for the missionaries to travel thousands of miles to the country. Then, he charges some Jesuit missionaries with being "open-hearted" to "wherever they found the least

word that seems to have resemblance to the mysteries to our holy faith”<sup>125</sup> in the Confucian canons and they would not examine the context and apply it to the mission.

Navarrete totally sides with Longobardi’s position on the neo-Confucian metaphysical percepts: since God is the son of *Li*, and all things, spiritual or moral, proceed from it, any equation of the Christian God with *Tian* and *Shangdi* is wrong and dangerous. He warns: “for the life of Christ, see what a god was preached in China, and there are some still that preach him: now is it possible the learned sect should be converted? How can they that are converted be saved through faith in such a god?”<sup>126</sup>

Navarrete stresses that the Christian God is preached in China as *Tian* and *Shangdi*, and it is intended to comply with the Confucian literati’s philosophy, which only aims to “gain their good.” However, it is still not productive, and cannot prevent them from being banished to Macao. Navarrete states that the Confucian literati are not only atheists, but also idolaters.<sup>127</sup> For a point so essential as a false god being preached, he has to refer the Jesuits’ approach to Rome. In addition, Navarrete concludes that since the Confucian literati class is atheist, the missionaries cannot compromise their faith to Confucian atheism. Instead, Confucius “ought to be vigorously opposed,” and “only the law of God and his son of Jesus Christ, is good and holy, only that can save, the rest are wicked and pestilential.”<sup>128</sup> To defend his Christian faith, Navarrete advocated that the missionaries be ready for martyrdom: they would rather be “lying under the scandal, than conceal or forsake the truth.”<sup>129</sup>

Navarrete’s book had a devastating effect on the Jesuit mission in China. As a member of the Jesuit order and the Superior of the China Mission, Longobardi himself spoke out against the atheist Confucian literati in his treatise, which was collected in



Navarrete's book. It was a document used by Navarrete against the Jesuits and their policy of accommodation. Since the Jesuits had many enemies from the other religious orders, the book itself was an indictment against them, making the Jesuit Fathers indistinguishable from the infidels. As a result, the reputation of the Society of Jesus as the army of Christ was seriously impaired.

In 1693, Bishop Charles Maigrot, Vicar Apostolic of Fu Jian province in China, who was also a member of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, rekindled the rites controversy. During his mission in the province, Maigrot issued a seven-point mandate to forbid practicing the local rites, on the top of which were Matteo Ricci's terms for the Christian God, *Tian* and *Shangdi*:

Except for European names which only can be expressed in a barbarian way by Chinese characters and words, we declare that only and true God ("*Deus optimus et maximus*") is to be called exclusively by the name *Tianzhu*, Lord of Heaven, which has been adopted for a long time. The two other Chinese terms *Tian* and *Shangdi* are to be refused totally, and even less can one claim *that* any Chinese identifies with these two names *Tian* and *Shangdi*, the same God whom Christians adore.<sup>130</sup>

Maigrot's campaign against the Jesuits started from his effort to eliminate the equivalents of the Christian God, *Tian* and *Shangdi*. He knew that to eliminate Confucianism, he had to forbid these two terms in his missionary activities, so that the links between Christianity and Confucianism could be removed; hence the policy of accommodating the literati class would be stopped.

In addition, Maigrot also did not allow his Chinese converts to practice the ceremonies or rites dedicated to their ancestors and Confucius. As a result, the tablets, on

which appeared *Tian* and *Shangdi* were ordered to be removed; those who had the tablets for paying their respect to their ancestors were required to destroy them. The most radical thing was that Maigrot ordered the missionaries to ensure that the Chinese Christians ought not to read the Confucian canons and other writings containing atheism and superstition.<sup>131</sup> By doing this, Maigrot not only wanted to disassociate Christianity from Confucianism, but also wanted to eradicate the latter's influences on Chinese culture and customs.

In fact, what Maigrot intended to do was to convert Chinese customs and culture as a whole, and replace them with Christianity-coated European culture. Like his mendicant brethren from the Philippines, Maigrot was imbued with an extreme belief that anything that was different from the European form of Christianity could be considered evil, and had to be eradicated. Hence a militant stance was taken to translate Chinese customs and social structure to that of the European image, thereby subjecting them to European power.

The Vatican responded to Maigrot's mandate quickly. In 1704, the Holy Office issued a decree signed by Pope Clement XI, formally confirming Maigrot's position against the Jesuits' policy of accommodation. *Tian* and *Shangdi*, for the Christian term "God" by Matteo Ricci, were again dismissed as inappropriate equivalents that contained the material aspect of the sky, or heaven; only *Tianzhu* could be used as the legitimate equivalent for God. But, why did the Pope and Maigrot single out *Tianzhu* as the official equivalent for the Christian God?

Kund Lundhaek suggests that the Vatican's confirmation of the term *Tianzhu* could be considered a conscious effort to oppose "an obvious temptation, namely to accept *Tian* and *Shangdi*, straightforward words known to everyone in China."<sup>133</sup>

However, we must add that *Tianzhu* had been long used in the Jesuit mission in China and had lost its association with the connotations of the Buddhist deity. Once missionaries of other orders rejected the Confucian terms *Tian* and *Shangdi*, the only term left would be *Tianzhu*. If the missionaries translated *Deus* otherwise, the link between the signifier, *Deus*, and some other signified had to be reestablished from the beginning. For the interests of Ricci's opponents, this was something they had to avoid.

What seems to be unusual was that the Chinese emperor, Kangxi, reasserted *Tian* and *Shangdi*. When receiving the Pope's legate de Touron in 1705, the Emperor Kangxi asked Maigrot why he condemned the use of *Tian*. Maigrot replied briefly: "*Tian* does not mean the Lord of heaven." The emperor retorted:

I am very surprised at you. Did I not already state that *Tian* is a much better expression for the Lord of Heaven than *Tianzhu*[...]for *Tian* universally means the Lord of Heaven and the ten thousand things.<sup>134</sup>

In a later interview with de Touron, the Chinese emperor harshly accused Maigrot:

His Chinese knowledge is insufficient: he is unable to speak understandably. He needs an interpreter: he not only does not understand the meaning of the books, but he does not even know the characters...Europeans can not understand the meaning of the books correctly, but want to discuss them.<sup>135</sup>

The interesting questions here are: Why was the Chinese emperor personally involved in the affair? And why did he himself try to justify the Riccian line of translation?

To answer these questions, we have to understand the emperor's attitude in light of his politics. Kangxi first acted as the defender of the Christian faith for the Jesuits. In 1693, he issued an edict, formally allowing the Jesuits to practice and preach Christianity freely within the Empire. Later, under the influence of the Jesuits, Kangxi expressed openly that the terms *Tian* and *Shangdi*, which only existed in the Confucian canonical texts, not in the commentaries added by the later neo-Confucian School, were the equivalents of the Christian God. In addition, he stated that the ceremonies and rites for ancestors and Confucius were purely civil and political.<sup>136</sup>

This gesture of support came at the time the Jesuits were widely condemned in Europe. The emperor's remarks aimed to confirm the Riccian position. However, we must not understand the emperor's message as a sign of his recognition that Christianity was a legitimate religion in China, nor will we consider it a sign that the emperor had submitted to the Christian power for conversion. The emperor's show of his support for the Riccian line was largely anchored in his political desire to maintain the power hierarchy in his empire.

With more than one hundred years' effort, the Jesuits had gradually influenced China in different areas, especially in the scientific fields. The Chinese were impressed by their excellent services to the court, by their behavior that was compatible with the Chinese moral standard. As a result, they were widely accepted by the ruling literati class.

This being the case, from the Ming Dynasty to the early period of the Qing Dynasty, the Jesuits' efforts to convert the Chinese went on progressively, though prosecutions occurred sometimes. The emperor saw the Jesuits' stay in China as harmless, and perhaps even as helpful, in strengthening his rule, as they respected Chinese culture and customs and provided outstanding services to the court with their scientific knowledge and wisdom.

However, when the term and rites controversies occurred, the Emperor Kangxi realized that if the Christian God were disassociated from *Tian* and *Shangdi*, the link between Christianity and the Confucian literati class would no longer exist. The Chinese converts and missionaries would become another independent group, which would threaten Confucian values and, hence, the imperial power hierarchy. In addition, given that the Pope was the holy authority of all Christians, the emperor feared that the Pope would challenge the secular order of the Empire and consequently threaten his power by controlling the Chinese Christian converts. These factors could account for the emperor's motive in supporting the Jesuit Fathers and opposing the militant missionaries as represented by Maigrot.

Morales, Navarrete and the like, who based their mission experiences in the colonies of Spain and Portugal, shared a common ground that any divergences from the line set by the Council of Trent and from their practice in the colonies constituted a compromise of the Christian faith. This, they feared, would lead to syncretism, a form of heresy, and hence dilute Christian identity. Local customs presumably contrary to Christian values would be considered atheist, therefore, evil and ought to be uprooted resolutely in favor of a European form of liturgies and rites. The mendicant friars, and

later missionaries from other religious orders, desired that the Chinese pagans would be translated, converted and conquered, body and soul, submitting themselves entirely to Christianity and hence European power.

However, what these missionaries could not see was the power structure embedded in the Empire. Religious zeal and European chauvinism dominated their pursuits: since the Chinese were atheists and idolaters, they were necessarily sinners and evil, and ought to be converted physically and spiritually, like the native Indians in the colonized countries. The Jesuits' policy of accommodation was naturally regarded as a concession to the evil, which had to be opposed resolutely.

The irreconcilable oppositions between the emperor and the fundamentalist missionaries brought them into an open conflict, which would jeopardize the early evangelical foundations established by the Jesuits. It was also a confrontation between the imperial power and the holy authority for maintaining their absolute presence in the Chinese converts' lives.

Consequently, in 1706, Kangxi issued an edict, which revoked his former decree for the tolerance of Christianity in China. Those who were not willing to obey the rules set by Matteo Ricci had to go; those who were willing to obey the rules had to obtain a *piao* (certificate) for permission to remain in the country.<sup>137</sup>

In 1742, Pope Benedict XIV issued *EX quo singular* and reaffirmed the former decree on the rites and the term issue, with an even more hardened tone, that any form of discussion on the matter was forbidden. Anyone who broke the rules was to be excommunicated automatically and immediately. With this, the Pope hoped "to uproot from the field the Weeds sown by the enemy"<sup>138</sup>

The previous edict by Kangxi demonstrated the tolerance for Christianity in China; the latest one overrode the former and ushered in waves of persecution of the Christians in the Empire. The Pope's decree in fact formally announced the end of the accommodation policy, hence the end of the Christian mission in the country.

With Christians persecuted and missionaries expelled, the China Mission was stopped. The failure of the Christian mission eventually brought an end to translation and conversion, as neither side could find a common ground to start with. Neither was there a suitable environment, similar to that which had been created by the Jesuits to continue, at least for the time being.

## 7. Conclusion

We have traversed the history of the Catholic translation of the terms in the Ming and the early Qing Dynasties to see how the term issue caused serious debates and, being one of the main factors, eventually jeopardized the early efforts to proselytize China. Through the missionary's translating of the Christian God, including the Nestorians' efforts, we see that different strategies were employed in the translative activity. Examining the missionary activities in Asia, we see the differences highlighted by a contrastive context. What was the force that determined the mission policy and consequently the translation strategies? Can the translation problematics in the colonial context really be reduced to the question of the incommensurability of language and thought?

First, we would like to recall the thesis on the incommensurability of language and thought in the Christian mission in China. Gernet attributes the failure of the Jesuit efforts to proselytize China to mere language and thought issues. However, when we examine his conclusion and the missionary translation history, we find that there is a serious flaw in this theoretical hypothesis, which is even contradictory to the translation reality in the colonial context.

As described in Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism*, translation is linked with conversion and conquest. The Castilian missionaries tried to reformulate the native language system and social customs in line with their colonial project. Based on their logic, as the Tagalogs were incapable of expressing the Christian truth, they had to reshape the structure of the native language into the Latin language system; the native



social customs which were regarded by the missionary resistant to the Divine Light had to be uprooted and replaced with the Castilian liturgies and rites. The missionaries did realize the incommensurability between the native language and thought with that of the Castilian, and they took drastic measures to make the target language and culture system similar to the source language and culture, so that they were more likely to receive the Christian truth. This process of translation, which was guided by the missionaries, became a process of conversion, in which the natives lost their linguistic and cultural identities and became subservient to the Castilian language and cultural values. As a result, through the process of translation, the Tagalogs were not only converted to Christianity, but also became the obedient subjects of the colonizers.

In her *Siting Translation*, Niranjana also highlights similar perspective. Because of the incommensurability of language and thought held by the British colonizers, in India, the Hindu laws had to be translated into modern English, so that they could be updated and made relevant to the Indian social structures. Claiming that the Hindus were not real followers of Indian religion, the missionaries asked them to turn to “the more evolved religion of the West.”<sup>139</sup> Because of the incommensurability, translation is thus used in different discourses, be it religious, philosophical or linguistic, with an ultimate aim to translate the natives into the colonized.

Venuti also raises a similar issue in the context of Anglo-American hegemony — the violence accompanied by fluent English translation strategy. The thesis underlain is the same: since the languages and thought patterns of the minoritized countries and groups are not compatible with that of the English speaking countries, especially America, they need to be translated and to adopt Anglo-American culture and values.

In the colonial context, the premise of the incommensurability of language and thought in fact justifies the violent translation practice in question, which in turn, as Niranjana points out, “colludes with or enables the construction of a teleological and hierarchical model of cultures that places Europe at the pinnacle of civilization, and thus provides a position for the colonized.”<sup>140</sup> Thus, translation becomes a process of oppressive conversion — the powerful turn the meek into their inferior by means of unequal and violent linguistic and cultural transfers.

However, when we examine the translation of the Christian term “God” in the Chinese context, we find that the above theoretical premise concerning language and thought did not lead to translation violence, nor to establishing a colonizing and colonized power hierarchy.

Evidently, having realized the differences between the Chinese language and thought with that of the West, The Jesuits did not translate Chinese language and thought into the Western patterns, instead, they did otherwise. How do we account for this?

This question prompts us to examine the invisible forces that shaped the missionaries’ translation. Through our analysis of the term issue, we may conclude that it is the power differentials that made the China Mission different from other Catholic evangelical activities in Asia and the New World. Hence, post-colonial theoretical framework of translation and resistance by foreignizing vis-à-vis domesticating is not applicable in our case study, at least in part.

In the face of a powerful country with a sophisticated culture and military might, the Portuguese and Spanish colonial powers were not able to conquer China, even though they wanted to. As for the missionaries, they realized that in their missions to China, they

lacked a colonial context similar to that of the Philippines or the New World and hence could not convert the Chinese in a like manner. As a result, instead of using forceful means to convert the Chinese, they had to use accommodative measures to preach their Christian messages. Guided by this ideology, the missionaries domesticated their own source text and culture to the target language and culture, trying to make themselves and their culture part of Chinese heritage. Thus, the Christian God was first rendered into *Tianzhu*, and later *Tian* and *Shangdi*. In doing so, the Jesuits intended to make the Confucian literati believe that what they preached was in harmony with their beliefs and values, though the Jesuits also tried vehemently to subvert the Confucian messages. Mainly, it is the power differentials that made the Jesuits see the necessity of using the policy of accommodation to appease the ruling class, so that they could stay in the Empire and Christianize its people gradually.

The term issue evolved into a crisis only after the arrival of the mendicant friars from the Philippines. They continued to preach Christianity in China with the strategies that had been proved to be workable in the Spanish colonies. This inevitably made them question the legitimacy of the terms *Tian* and *Shangdi* as well as Chinese customs. The friars and their brethren not only wanted to convert the Chinese to Christianity, but also radically transform their culture and values to that of the West. As a result, the essentially hard-lined Christian evangelization put them into a direct confrontation with the emperor, because the mendicant missionaries challenged the imperial hierarchy with their effort to change the established accommodative policy. The emperor's answer to the domesticating of Chinese culture and customs was his reiteration of sticking to the equivalents for God by Matteo Ricci on the Chinese terms. The irreconcilable conflict

between the Catholic hardliners and the emperor led to a standstill for the Christian mission until the nineteenth century. It was basically a battle for dominance through the changing of the terms and Chinese rites.

Through the case study, we have learned that the theoretical pattern of translation and resistance by Rafael, Niranjana and Venuti differs from the missionary translation practice in China. Because of power differentials between the colonials, represented by Spain and Portugal, and the Chinese Empire, the missionaries' translation poses a different paradigm that the missionaries no longer used the source text based strategy to foreignizing the target language and culture, nor did they use radical translation strategies to change the customs and values of the target language audience. To reach their goal of Christianizing China, the missionaries had to use a subversive interpretation to transmit their messages, which did not work very well. It is power that determines the missionaries policy, hence their translation strategies.

The term dispute is not a matter of the incommensurability of language and thought, nor is it a linguistic choice. Behind the issue, we see overarching power that shaped the translation practice. The power differentials in political, cultural, religious, and intellectual aspects between the colonial powers and the Chinese Empire underlay and determined the nature of the term battle, which serve as parameters for the adoption of corresponding translation strategies and methods. These aspects of power relations mean much more to the Jesuit translation practice.

We believe that translation, though involved with verbal transfers, is not as innocent as it appears to be and is not just a purely technical process. It is an activity conducted in a specific milieu and time for a definite purpose. Through our source and

target text comparisons, an analysis of power relations between the language pairs reveals not only a translator's values and tendencies, but also power differentials attached to the translated verbal signs. Translation, showcased by the Jesuit translation experience, in particular the Catholic term question in China, is a field for raising questions regarding the communicative act as it is shaped by a coercive power. It is this aspect of translation that is more revealing and thought provoking to Translation Studies. With this academic investigation, we have shown not only how translation is undertaken, but also how power serves as a paradigm that conditions the translative act.

## Notes:

1. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.231.
2. Edward W. Said, "Criticism between Culture and System," in *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, p.216.
3. Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, p. ix.
4. Ibid., p.x.
5. Ibid., p.106.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.58.
8. Ibid., p.65
9. Ibid., p.175.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p.208.
12. Ibid., p.209.
13. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p.30.
14. Ibid., p.2.
15. Ibid., p.3.
16. Ibid., p.p.180-185.
17. Ibid., p.186.
18. Ibid., p.173.
19. Maria Tymoczko, "Translation and Political Engagement," in *The Translator*, No.1,2000, p.p.23-47.
20. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.15.
- 21 Ibid., p.5.

22. Leo Tak-hung Chan, “‘Colonization,’ Resistance and the Uses of Postcolonial Translation Theory in Twentieth-century China,” in *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era*, p.53.
23. Edwin Gentzler and Maria Tymoczko, “Introduction,” in *Translation and Power*, p.xxi.
24. Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained*, p.14.
25. D.E. Mungello gives an excellent account of the European understanding of the Chinese language and philosophical thinking in his *The Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, 1985. In *The Jewish Bishop and the Chinese Bible: S.I.J. Schereschewsky (1831-1906)*, 1999, Irene Ebber reviews the history of the term question from the Jesuit mission in the sixteenth century up to the Protestant evangelization in the nineteenth century.
26. See the notes of Qiong Zhang’s “Jesuit Scholastic Psychology and the Confucian discourse,” in *The Jesuits: Culture, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540—1773*, p.p.377-78. In Qiong Zhang’s PhD dissertation “Cultural Accommodation or Intellectual Colonization? A Reinterpretation of the Jesuit Approach to Confucianism during the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” Qiong Zhang characterizes the Jesuits’ cultural accommodation in China as intellectual colonization. But Qiong Zhang fails to link the Spanish and Portuguese maritime expansion and colonization with the Catholic missionary activities in China and Asia. His thesis only takes the issue of the Jesuits accommodative approach to Confucianism on a theological and philosophical basis — we have an impression that the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism is only an intellectual issue.
27. Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, p.239.
28. Theo Hermans, “Paradoxes and Aporias in Translation Studies,” in *Translation Studies: Perspective on an Emerging Discipline*, p.19; also see his “Translation’s Representation,” *Theoretical Construction of Translation from a Cultural Perspective*, p.17.
29. André Levefere, “Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation,” *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, p.p.13-14.

30. Ibid.
31. Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, translated from the Latin by Callagher, p.p.341-342.
32. Shin Keung Lee, "Nestorianism in China," *Ching Feng*, 16/3&4, 1973, p.113.
33. Weimin Gu, *Jidujiao yu zhongguo shehui* [Christianity and Contemporary China], p.32.
34. James Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-An Fu*, 1966, p.p.1-32.
35. Shaojun Wang, *Hanyu jinjiao wendian quanshi* [Chinese Nestorian Scriptures Annotated and Interpreted], 1996, p.85.
36. Translation is mine.
37. Peter K.H Lee, "Naming the Divine: The Christian-Chinese Cross-cultural Experience," *Ching Feng*, 39/2 June 1996, p.79
38. Xiepan Zhou, *Zhongguo jidujiao* [Chinese Christianity], p.30.
39. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, p.59.
40. Shiu Keung Lee, "Nestorianism in China," *Ching Feng*, 16/3&4, 1973, p.126.
41. Ibid.
42. Weimin Gu, *Jidujiao yu zhongguo shehui* [Christianity and Contemporary China], p.7.
43. For the details of the contrastive studies, see George Dunne's *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* and Shenwen Li's *Stratégies missionnaires des jésuites français en Nouvelle-France et en Chine au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. The former provides abundant information on different missionary strategies practised in China and Goa, India; the latter focuses on the Jesuit missions in China and Quebec.
44. See the first two chapters of George Dunne's *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*.
45. Ibid., p.9.
46. Ibid., p.10.



47. Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, p.55.
48. See the first part of Ricci's Journal.
49. Ibid., p.86.
50. See the first part of Ricci's journal.
51. George Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, p.18.
52. Étienne, R, *Les Jésuits en Chine (1552-1773), la querelle des rites*, p.261.
53. Dunne, George, p.16.
54. Ibid., p.17.
55. Ibid., p.19.
56. Ibid., p.p.17-21.
57. See Chapter Two of Andrew C. Ross' *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542-1742*.
58. Jacques Gernet, "Sur les Differentes Versions du Premier Catechisme en Chinois de 1584," in *Studia Sino-Monogolica*, p.409.
59. Ibid.
60. Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, p.p.117-118.
61. George Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, p.33.
62. Jacques Gernet, "Sur les Differentes Versions du Premier Catechisme en Chinois de 1584," in *Studia Sino-Monogolica*, p.407.
63. Ibid, p.409.
64. Matteo Ricci, p.149.

65. Gernet, Jacques, "Sur les Differentes Versions du Premier Catechisme en Chinois de 1584," *Studia Sino-Monogolica*, p.410.
66. Ibid., p.411.
67. The original version of the Chinese tract is available at: <http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu/bibliography>
68. Ibid., p.412.
69. Ibid., p.407.
70. Ibid.
71. Duteil, Jean-Pierre, *Le Mandat du Ciel*, p.p.85-86.
72. Also see the second part of Matteo Ricci's journal.
73. <http://www.newadvent.org>
74. See the second part of Ricci's journal.
75. Qiong Zhang cites the letter in "Demystifying *Qi*: The Politics of Cultural Translation and Interpretation in the Early Jesuit Mission to China," in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, p.82.
76. Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, p.448.
77. Matteo Ricci, *Tianzhu shiyi* [The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven], translated by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen, p.57.
78. Ibid., pp.70-71.
79. Ibid., pp.106-107.
80. Ibid., p.123
81. Ibid, pp.122-123
82. Kelly, Peter Julian, "Christianity and China," [www.columban.org.au/China/cac\\_98july.htm](http://www.columban.org.au/China/cac_98july.htm)
83. Matteo Ricci, *Tianzhu shiyi* [The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven], p.p.124-125.
84. Ibid., p.125.
85. Ibid., p.127.

86. Jacques Gernet cites the letter in his *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, p.25.

87. Matteo Ricci, *Tianzhu shiyi* [The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven], p.81.

88. Paul Rule quotes Ricci's letter in his *K'ung-tze or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, p.1.

89. Matteo Ricci wrote in his journal the following lines:

During his [Matteo Ricci] sleep, he had a dream, in which he met a strange wayfaring man, who said to him, "Is this the way you wander about this vast kingdom, imagining that you can uproot an age-old religion and replace it with a new one?" Now, it so happened that from the time of his entrance into China he had always kept his ultimate design as an utter secret.

See his *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, p.273.

90. See the first two chapters of *Zhongguo zongjiaotongshi* [A General History of China's Religions].

91. Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, p.p.193-194.

92. See Weizhen Zhu's preface of *Li Madou Zhongwen zhuyi ji*[Matteo Ricci's Anthology of Chinese Writings and Translation].

93. Jacques Gernet, *China and The Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, p.49.

94. Ibid., p.50.

95. Ibid., p.33.

96. Ibid.

97. See the decrees at: <http://www.bible-researcher.com/trent1.html>

98. See Archie Lee's "Syncretism From the Perspectives of Chinese Religion and Biblical Tradition," *Ching Feng*, 39/1 March 1996. The author notes:

What it contributes to the pursuit of syncretism in China are the assumptions that the one true way (the *tao*) is open to all and all religions will eventually usher in the ideal union with the *tao*.

99. See the decrees of the Council of Trent.

100. See Longobardi's treatise on the term issue, which will be dealt with hereafter.

101. Claudia Collan, "The Treatise on Chinese Religions (1623) of N. Longobardi, S.J.," *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal*, 1995, p.30.

102. Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study*, p.21.

103. See Chapter 5 of Andrew C. Ross' *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542-1742*.

104. Erik Zürcher, "Jesuits Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative," *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, 1994, p.51.

105. Niccola Longobardi, "A Short Answer," in *An Account of the Empire of China, Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*, p.166.

106. Claudia Collani, "The Treatise on Chinese Religions (1623) of N. Longobardi, S.J.," *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal*, p.35.

107. Niccola Longobardi, "A Short Answer," p.p.175-176.

108. *Ibid.*, p.18.

109. *Ibid.*, it must be noted, however, that after the German philosopher, Leibniz, had read Longobardi's treatise, he concluded that the Chinese had an idea about God and *Li* was quite an acceptable equivalent for the Christian God. For the details, see "The Treatise on Chinese Religions (1623) of N. Longobardi, S.J.," *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal*, p.36.

110. *Ibid.*, p.185.

111. *Ibid.*, 196.

112. *Ibid.*, p.p.198-199.

113. Paul Rule, *K'ung-tze or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, p.86
114. Ibid, p.p.86-87.
115. Ibid., p.88.
116. Ray R. Noll "Introduction," in *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, p.vii.
117. Paul Rule, *K'ung-tze or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, p.73.
118. John E. Wills, JR., "From Manila to Fuan: Asian Contexts of Dominican Mission Policy," in *The Chinese Rites Controversy and Its History and Meaning*, p.p.123-124.
119. Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610*, p.96.
120. Ibid., p.97.
121. Paul Rule, *K'ung-tze or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, p.92.
122. *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, p.5.
123. Ibid., p.6.
124. Ibid.
125. Domingo Ferandez Navarrete, *An Account of the Empire of China, Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*, written in Spanish, in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now first Printed from Original Manuscripts*, p.179.
126. Ibid., p.187.
127. Ibid., p.186.
128. Ibid., p.201.
129. Ibid.
130. Claudia Collani, "Charles Maigrot's Role in the Chinese Rites Controversy," in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, p.152.
131. Ibid.
132. *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, p.10.

133. Kund Lundbaek, "Joseph Premare and the Name of God in China," in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, p.132.
134. Ibid., p.166.
135. Ibid., p.168.
136. See Claudia Collani's "Charles Maigrot's Role in the Chinese Rites Controversy," in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, p.152.
137. Edward J. Malatesta's "A Fatal Clash of Wills," in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, p.p.217-219.
138. *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, p.52.
139. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p.20.
140. Ibid, p.18.

## Bibliography

### Books

- Bassnett, Susan & André Levefere *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation, Multilingual Matters*, Clevedon; Philadelphia, 1998.
- Cheyfitz, Eric *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from the Tempest to Tarzan*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997.
- Ching, Julia *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study*, the Institute of Oriental Religions, Sophia University, Tokyo, 1977.
- Dunne, George *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, the University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1962.
- Duteil, Jean-Pierre *Le Mandat du Ciel*, Edition Arguments, Paris, 1994.
- Ebber, Irene *The Jewish Bishop and the Chinese Bible: S.I.J. Schereschewsky (1831-1906)*, Kominklijke Brill NV, Leiden, the Netherlands, 1999.
- Étiemble, R *Les Jésuits en Chine (1552-1773), la querelle des rites*, René Julliard, Paris, 1966.
- Foucault, Michel *Power*, translated by Robert Hurley and others, the New Press, New York, 2000.
- The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York, 1972.
- Gernet, Jacques *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, translated from French into English by Janet Lloyd, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.
- Gu, Weimin *Jidujiao yu jindai zhongguo shehui* [Christianity and Contemporary China], Shanghai renmin chuban she, Shanghai, 1997.

- Hay, Malcolm V *Failure in the Far East; Why and How the Breach Between the Western World and China first Began*, Dufour Editions, Philadelphia, 1957.
- Hoy, David Couzens *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Basil Blackwell Ltd, England, 1986.
- Jensen, Lionel M *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization*, Duke University Press, Durham 1997.
- Latourette, K.S *A History of Christian Missions in China*, Russell & Russell, New York, 1967.
- Legge, James *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-An Fu*, Paragon Reprint Corp., New York, 1966.
- Li, Shenwen *Stratégies missionnaires des jésuites français en Nouvelle-France et en Chine au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, L'Université Laval, 2001.
- Liu, Lydia (ed.) *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1999.
- Ma, Zhuyi *Zhongguo fanyishi* [A History of Translation in China], Hubei jiaoyu chuban she, Wuhan, China, 1999.
- McHoul, Alec & Wendy Grace (ed.) *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and Subject*, New York University Press, 1993.
- Mou, Zhongjian & Zhang Jian *Zhongguo zhongjiao tongshi* [A General History of China's Religions], Shehui kexue wenxian chuban she, Beijing, 2002.
- Mungello, D.E (ed.) *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, Steyler Verl, Nettetal, 1994.
- The Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, Stuttgart, 1985.
- Navarrete, D. F *An Account of the Empire of China, Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*, Written in Spanish, in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts*, Printed for Awusham and John Church, London, 1704.



- Niranjana, Tejaswini *Siting Translation*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992.
- O'Malley, John W (ed.) *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1542-1773*, University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Rabinow, Paul *The Foucault Reader*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986.
- Rafael, Vicente *Contracting Colonialism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1988.
- Riccardi, Alessandra *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Ricci, Matteo *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, translated from the Latin by Callagher, Louis, Random House, New York, 1953.
- Tianzhu shiyi* [The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven], translated by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen, the Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1985.
- Robinson, Douglas *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained*, St. Jerome, Manchester, 1997.
- Ross, Andrew C *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542-1742*, New York: Orbis Books, 1994.
- Rose, Marilyn G. (ed.) *Beyond the Western Tradition*, State University of New York, Center for Research in Translation, Binghamton, 2000.
- Rule, Paul *K'ung-tze or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, Allen&Unwin, Sydney, 1986.
- Saeki, Yoshiro-o *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, Academy of Oriental Culture, Tokyo Institute, Tokyo, 1951.
- Said, Edward W *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1983.
- Shen, Dinping *Mingqing zhiji zhongxi wenhua jiaoliu shi—mingdai:tiaoshi yu huitong*[A Cultural History of East and West During the Ming and Qing Dynasties—the Ming Dynasty: Adjustment

- and Accommodation], Shangwu yinshu guan, Beijing, 2001.
- Simon, Sherry & St.-Pierre (ed.) *Changing the Terms: The Translating in the Postcolonial Era*, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 2000.
- St. Sure, Donald F (trans.) *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, San Francisco, 1992.
- Tymockzo, Maria & Edwin Gentzler *Translation and Power*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 2002.
- Venuti, Lawrence *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, Routledge, London, 1998.
- The Translator's Invisibility*, Routledge, London, 1995.
- Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, Routledge, London, 1992.
- Von Wolfgang Bauer, H. *Studia Sino-Monogolica*, Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, Wiesbaden, 1979.
- Wang, Shaojun *Hanyu jinjiao wendian quanshi* [Chinese Nestorian Scriptures Annotated and Interpreted], Sanlian chuban she, Beijing, 1996.
- Weizhen, Zhu, *Li Madou zhongwen zhuyi ji* [Matteo Ricci's Anthology of Chinese Writings and Translation], Fudan daxue chuban she, Shanghai, 2001.
- Xie, Tianzhen (ed.) *Theoretical Construction of Translation from a Cultural Perspective*, SFLE chuban she, Shanghai, 2000.
- Young, John D *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1983.
- Zetzsche, Jost Oliver *The Bible in China: The History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*, Steyler Ver., Nettetal, 1999.
- Zhou, Xiepan *Zhongguo jidujiao* [Chinese Christianity], Shangwu yinshu guan, Beijing, 2000.

## **Journals**

- Collan, Claudia                      “The Treatise on Chinese Religions (1623) of N. Longobardi, S.J.,” *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1995, p.30.
- Lee, Archie                            “Syncretism From the Perspectives of Chinese Religion and Biblical Tradition,” *Ching Feng*, 39/1 March 1996.
- Lee, Peter K.H.,                    “Naming the Divine: The Christian-Chinese Cross-cultural Experience,” *Ching Feng*, 39/2 June 1996, p.79.
- Lee, Shin Keung                    “Nestorianism in China,” *Ching Feng*, 16/3&4, 1973, p.113.
- Tymoczko, Maria                    “Translation and Political Engagement,” *The Translator*, No.1, 2000, p.p.23-47.

## **Dissertation**

- Zhang, Qiong                        “Cultural Accommodation or Intellectual Colonization? A Reinterpretation of the Jesuit Approach to Confucianism during the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventh Centuries,” PhD dissertation, Harvard University, Mass., 1996.

## **Other Sources**

The Catholic Encyclopedia, [www.newadvent.org/cathen/13034a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13034a.htm):

The Jesuit Archives, <http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu/bibliography>

Other Internet websites:

[www.columban.org.au/China/cac\\_98july.htm](http://www.columban.org.au/China/cac_98july.htm):

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/trent1.html>