

## REVIEW ESSAY

### The Chinese Rites Controversy: From Its Beginning to Modern Times by George Minamiki, S.J.\*

Peter Fleming, S. J.

With the publication of *The Chinese Rites Controversy: From Its Beginning to Modern Times*, George Minamiki, S.J., has joined three other eminent scholars of the Chinese rites controversy (典禮問題): Joseph Brucker, S.J., ("Chinois, Rites." *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 1932, cols. 2363-2391) Henri Bernard-Maitre, S.J., ("Chinois, Rites." *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclesiastiques*, vol. 12, 1953, cols. 731-741) and Francis A. Rouleau, S.J., ("Chinese Rites Controversy." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, 1967, 611-617). A member of the Japanese province of the Society of Jesus, Father Minamiki received his doctorate in liturgy from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, where he currently teaches Japanese language and culture. Originally the author's doctoral dissertation, this book has actually been Father Minamiki's life-long project. He states that his interest in the Chinese rites controversy began when as a young man, a missionary told him "that it was wrong for me as a Catholic to

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\* Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985. 353p.

offer incense (*shōkō*) at Japanese funerals and also to take part in the Buddhist festival of the dead (*bon*). I then traced the roots of these prohibitions back to the days of the early missionaries in China”(319).

Henri Bernard-Maitre once warned that there is such an overabundance of material on the Chinese rites controversy and that so many developments and changes in the history of the controversy have taken place, a scholar must make his way as though he were an explorer going through a “thick jungle.” Father Minamiki has admirably made his way through this “thick jungle” by focusing on a single aspect of rites controversy, the Confucian and ancestral rites of the Chinese people, an aspect which he traces from its beginning to modern times. Following the lead of Francis A. Rouleau, he excludes from his book the historically separate questions of translating Christian concepts into Chinese terminology, as well as the Chinese liturgy as such. From the beginning of the book to its conclusion, the author lucidly sets forth his line of development, the historical contexts of the rites and the controversy, and his arguments as to why the rites were prohibited and then subsequently restored. The questions of a Chinese language liturgy and the use of Chinese in Christian terminology are separate issues and are not part of the Chinese Rites Controversy. For studies on the use of the Chinese language in Christian terminology,<sup>1)</sup> in the forthcoming issue of the *Monumenta Serica* Father Weingartner will treat “The Early Jesuits in China: Searching for Religious Terms, the Ten Commandments.” For a brief history of the use of the Chinese language in the liturgy, Father D’Elia offers a lucid summary.<sup>2)</sup>

Father Minamiki offers a sympathetic reading of the many and

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1) Fredric Weingartner, S.J.’s, “Sources for a Treatise on the Ten Commandments Based on the Writings of Early Jesuits in China,” *International Symposium on Chinese-Western Cultural Exchange in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Arrival of Matteo Ricci, S.J., in China*, September 11-16, 1983, Taipei, Taiwan, 830~838.

2) Pascal M. D’Elia, S.J.’s *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*. Shanghai: T’usewei Press, 1927.

complex dimensions of a controversy whose importance ranks with the controversies of the early Church which concerned the transition from an Hebraic-centered Christianity to a Gentile-centered Christianity.<sup>3)</sup> The polemic one often finds within the Chinese rites controversy itself one will not find in Father Minamiki's book. The author does not simply repeat what has already been said by other scholars about the rites, but provides the reader with new data from Japanese sources. His main contribution to the scholarship on the rites question lies in a detailed analysis of the Japanese-Manchurian period (the 1930's), which became the turning point of the two-hundred year old controversy and led to the abrogation of ecclesiastical prohibitions regarding the rites in 1934.<sup>4)</sup>

Father Minamiki richly and meticulously documents his book; the bibliography is excellent. He employs Chinese ideographs for Chinese place names, as well as for Chinese and Japanese terms connected with the rites controversy; however the book's index is far too short. A third appendix containing a chronological outline of the primary events and dates of the rites controversy would have been helpful, as well as a fourth appendix containing English translations of the pertinent Roman documents germane to the early period of the rites question because these documents are in Latin. This book is for the scholar. For one who wishes an introduction to the rites controversy, Francis A. Rouleau's article in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* and Peter Barry's "The Chinese Rites Controversy," *Tripod*, vol. 12, 1982, 140-151, are the best. For a more detailed narrative of the historical intricacies of the rites question, von Pastor is the best.<sup>5)</sup>

In order to trace the development of the Confucian and ancestral rites

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3) *Acts of the Apostles* 15: 1~31.

4) Minamiki's "The Yasukuni Shrine Incident and the Chinese Rites Controversy." *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 66, 1980, 205~229.

5) Ludwig von Pastor, *A History of the Popes*, vol. 25, 353~361; vol. 29, 248~254; vol. 30, 199~205; vol. 31, 163~170; vol. 32, 648~651, and especially vol. 33, 393~400.

question, Father Minamiki divides his book into eight parts: (1) The Rites in the Ming Period; (2) The Position of Matteo Ricci; (3) The Age of Controversy; (4) The Period of Transition; (5) State Shinto in Japan; (6) The Church and the State Shinto Rites; (7) Wangtao in Manchukuo; and (8) The Final Decision in the Chinese Rites Question. In these eight chapters the author treats The Age of Ricci (1582-1610), The Age of Controversy (1645-1742), the Age of Transition (1742-1932), and the Modern Age (1932-Present).

The central question which the author explores throughout the book is: How did the participants in the rites controversy interpret the Confucian and ancestral rites? If the participants in the controversy understood the rites to be religious, then the rites were judged as superstitious and thus pagan, a violation of the First Commandment. The rites could not be practiced by a Chinese Christian. If, however, the participants in the controversy understood the rites as civil and political, then a Chinese Christian could practice them. Father Minamiki states that both sides in the controversy were united in the following: "Neither party to the dispute would allow the least contamination of Christianity with pagan teachings" (261). What the rites really involved, then, were social customs and social practices inextricably connected with the social fabric of Chinese society. States the author: "The ceremonies that the missionaries observed and on which they had to make a moral judgment were strange to their eyes, and they were certainly disturbing" (10). There were the wooden tablet ("seat of the spirit"), the *kowtow* reverence before the wooden tablet, the burning of incense and paper money, the offering of food and the slaying and offering of an animal in solemn ceremonies honoring Confucius.

To what extent were Chinese and, later, Japanese Catholics involved in the making of decisions regarding the rites? They were never directly involved. From beginning to end the Chinese rites controversy was a Western matter, or rather, a matter which Westerners dominated from beginning to end. Father Minamiki asserts that "the main

stumbling block in the process was the concentration of all the decision making in Rome" (22).

It was Matteo Ricci's attitude and policy on the Confucian and ancestral rites which later gave rise to the rites controversy (Ricci, b. Macerata, Italy, October 6, 1552; d. Peking, China, May 11, 1610). Very early Ricci realized that the Chinese people would never accept a foreign religion. Thus, Ricci attempted to make himself Chinese in order to win China for Christ.<sup>6)</sup> In a letter of February 15, 1609, after being twenty-seven years in China, Ricci warned against Europeanism and insisted that China have minimal foreign contacts. He furthermore urged that the Chinese church rely as little as possible on foreign money for its financial support, fearing that the Chinese church would become dependent upon Europe. In 1613, Nicoló Longobardo, Ricci's successor as superior of the China mission, dispatched Nicholas Trigault to Rome to argue for an indigenous clergy and for permission to employ the Chinese language in liturgical ceremonies.<sup>7)</sup>

Regarding the ceremonies by which the Chinese honored Confucius, Ricci judged that they fundamentally possessed a "civil and social significance" and therefore did not violate the First Commandment. Regarding the Chinese cult of the dead, Ricci judged that, in general, there was no superstition, that the rites involved 'reverence' and not 'worship,' and that the rites were fundamentally a means of preserving family unity and symbols of gratitude. Being a "sympathetic inquirer with a deep interest in and respect for the Chinese and their culture," Ricci approached the Chinese rites with "the conviction that the original substance of the rites was naturally good and could be continued with a Christian orientation" (20, 22). Longobardo supported Ricci on the civil

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6) Michele Ruggieri's paraphrase of 1 Cor. 9 : 22.

7) Forexcellent biographies of Matteo Ricci, the republished book of Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man from the West*. London: Collins, 1955, Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*. New York: Viking Press, 1984.

character of the Confucian and ancestral rites, while he objected to Ricci's position on the question of Christian concepts in traditional Chinese expressions (as did the Jesuits in Japan). When Ricci died, Longobardo presided over Ricci's funeral and Ricci was honored by both ecclesiastical and civil ceremonies (213, 254).

Ricci died in 1610. From the time of Ricci's death until 1645, disputes about the rites were intramural because the Jesuits were the only foreign missionaries in China. Enter the Dominicans and Juan Baptista Morales, O.P., who objected to the Jesuit method of evangelization. Morales judged that the Jesuit method was not specifically *Catholic* enough and was too humanistic. Here begins the Age of Controversy (1645-1742), an age which would not only involve China, but also Europe. Morales wrote to Rome stating that, as the Chinese people actually people actually practiced the rites, the rites were religious and thus superstitious, and thus against the First Commandment. Another China scholar on the early period of the Jesuits in China, George Dunne, S.J.<sup>8)</sup> points out in his book that Morales had only been in China for two and a half years when he wrote his appeal to Rome in 1636. Moreover, the information in his report took only one month to compile and was based upon the interviews with only eleven Chinese Christians from country villages where Christianity had been for less than ten years. Rome agreed with Morales and responded with the Decree of September 12, 1645; the decree was sanctioned by Innocent X.

The Jesuits, in turn, responded and stated that Morales misrepresented their method of evangelization and their interpretation of the rites. They sent Martino Martini, S.J., to Rome to represent their case. On March 23, 1656, Alexander VII approved the resolution of the Holy Office; the rites were "merely civil and political." With the decree of Alexander VII, China missionaries on both sides of the dispute faced a dilemma; one decree stated that the rites were religious and

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8) *Generation of Giants*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962, 297~298.

therefore not permitted, while the other decree stated that the rites were civil and therefore permitted. Chinese Catholics were faced with a crisis of conscience. Enter again another Dominican, Juan Polanco, who went to Rome for a clarification. On November 20, 1669, Clement IX decided to leave the matter of the rites up to the consciences of the missionaries. In an attempt to placate both sides of the rites dispute, Rome decided by not deciding at all, a decision which only worsened matters in China.

From Rome we go to China, where Charles Maigrot, a member of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, was Vicar Apostolic of Fukien. In order to put an end to the differences which divided the missionaries (and thus settle the consciences of the Chinese Catholics), and in order to set guidelines for China until Rome, in his opinion, made a final decision on the rites, Maigrot issued a pastoral letter in 1693 (the Mandate of 1693) in which he judged that the Confucian and ancestral rites as they were practiced by the Chinese people were, in fact, superstitious. Polemic now enters the rites dispute. Maigrot accused the Jesuits of lying; their representation to Rome did "not bespeak the truth in many things"; he also stated that certain propositions advanced by the Jesuits were "false, temerarious, and scandalous." Maigrot had his mandate hand-delivered to Rome in hopes that the theologians of the Holy Office would agree with him and thus settle the matter of rites the dispute. The theologians delayed because of other urgent business, so, in order to put pressure on Rome to act quickly, Maigrot's mandate was given to the Archbishop of Paris, Louis A. de Noilles, who, in turn, gave the mandate to the theological faculty of the Sorbonne. It just so happened that the theological faculty of the Sorbonne was then engaged in a heated theological debate with two other Jesuits on another matter concerning China. The Sorbonne theologians censored the writings of the two Jesuits and thus succeeded in awakening the attention of the Holy Office theologians in Rome. The pressure tactic worked. The Holy Office began its deliberations on the Maigrot

Mandate of 1693.

From Paris and the Sorbonne and Rome and the Holy Office we return to China. In March of 1692 the Emperor Kangxi issued an "Edict of Toleration" on behalf of Christianity in China. The Jesuits were happy with the Emperor's decision, but Maigrot's 1693 Mandate worried them. Thus, they memorialized the Emperor on November 30, 1700, asking about the religious or civil character of the rites. That very same day the Emperor responded to the Jesuits by way of imperial rescript; Kangxi stated that the rites were civil and political. The hand-delivered rescript from the dragon throne had an adverse effect on the Roman ecclesiastical authorities who were affronted because a civil authority had interfered in an ecclesiastical and theological matter. The Emperor, in turn, was upset because Rome interfered with the social and political institutions of China. The Chinese rites controversy now became a conflict between Church and State, so much so that the Emperor Kangxi withdrew his Edict of Toleration in 1720.

From 1704 until 1742 seven decrees were issued concerning the Chinese rites, the most important of these being by Clement XI on March, 19, 1715 (*Ex Illa Die*), and by Benedict XIV on July 11, 1742 (*Ex Quo Singulari*). These two decrees not only suppressed the Chinese rites, but they also enjoined upon all present and future China missionaries to take an oath against the rites and forbade all public and private discussion of the rites; the rites matter was not even to be mentioned in the confessional or in spiritual direction. In effect, these two decrees endorsed the Maigrot Mandate of 1693, a mandate from a man who could not speak, read, or write passable Chinese and a man who was eventually banished from China by the Emperor Kangxi. Regarding the Age of Controversy, Father Minamiki's comment clearly delineates the "thick jungle" that had grown up around the Chinese rites:

The bull *Ex quo singulari* was the official answer of the Roman

Catholic Church to this controversy. The making of this decision had involved in the course of a century and a half seven popes and two apostolic delegates: two Chinese emperors and their courts; the kings of Portugal and Spain, and France; the Jesuit confessor of Louis XIV; the Holy Office and the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith; the theology faculty of the Sorbonne; the Jansenists; preachers like Fenelon and Bossuet; writers like Voltaire and Leibniz; the missionaries, their congregations, and superiors. Most important of all, it touched the lives of Chinese Christians and affected in an irrevocable way the course of the Church in the Middle Kingdom (ix-x).

During the Period of Transition (1742-1932) there were no major pronouncements on the Chinese rites controversy. Individual inquiries on particulars concerning the rites arose, but these received individual responses from Rome. Missionaries to China decreased during the eighteenth century (as did Chinese Catholics), but began to increase during the early part of the nineteenth century due to the industrial revolution and the desire of Western nations to increase their trade with China. The unequal treaties and opium trade between Western nations and China of the 1830's brought protection to foreign missionaries, as did Western gunboats. China lagged far behind the modernization movement; the West brought great pressure upon China for change. Reform movements within China itself began. The Chinese overthrew their foreign, two-hundred and sixty-seven year old decadent Manchu masters in 1911.

During the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, China was in chaos, a semicolony continually humiliated by the West and Japan. Missionaries no longer had to be as sensitive to antagonizing the Chinese government as they went about evangelizing the Chinese people. The missionaries survived the Boxer Uprising of the early 1900's, but during the 1920's Chinese nationalism and anti-foreignism arose, alongside, and along with these movements so did an anti-Christian movement. Chinese patriots inevitably associated the missionaries with unequal

treaties, extraterritoriality, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism. In 1928 the Kuomintang government in Nanking declared religious freedom for China. Socio-political change over the past one hundred years had diminished the significance of the rites question because China emerged as a republic and, in the opinion of the democratic West and Church leaders, China was threatened by Communism, a movement which could mean the loss of China to the Soviet specter. Social issues overshadowed preoccupation over social customs such as the Chinese rites. It was during the early part of the twentieth century that the Roman Catholic Church began to change its mission policy by gradually withdrawing its identity from the political sphere and insisting upon the establishment of a native Church with a native clergy. Thus, in 1919 Benedict XV published his apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* in 1926 Pius XI published *Rerum Ecclesiae* and ordained the first six Chinese bishops in the same year. Both papal statements emphasized that the Church was not a political instrument, but a pastoral and spiritual community. In order to establish the Church's independence from particular foreign governments, both Popes insisted that the Church was international and supra-national. In 1932 Pius XI appointed Celso Constantini as the first apostolic delegate to China, a move which had been previously blocked by the French. Missiologists began to study the language and cultures of mission lands. According to Father Minamiki, the times were such that a change in the Chinese rites could take place.

That change did take place rather unexpectedly in 1932, but not in China, a change which inaugurated the Modern Age of the rites controversy. Two incidents in Japan in 1932 (both at Jesuit-run Sophia University in Tokyo) and the Wangtao Movement in Manchukuo (1932 and 1934) reopened the rites controversy and provided the solution to the controversy. The question posed by Ricci and debated for over two-hundred years — were the rites civil or religious — was posed once again when Japanese Catholics were confronted with paying their respects to imperial Shintoism, and Manchurian Catholics were confront-

ed with paying their respects to imperial Shintoism, and Manchurian Catholics were confronted with paying their respects to state Confucianism in the newly established Japanese puppet state of Manchuria. After a number of Church and government negotiations, Japanese and Manchurian Catholics were permitted to pay their respects to their respective imperial cults because state officials proved to the satisfaction of church officials that the cults had been secularized and thus emptied of superstition. Church officials also cited Canon 1218 of the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* regarding 'passive cooperation' in order to legitimate Catholic participation in state ceremonies. The Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith issued the instruction *Pluries Instanterque* on May 26, 1936, on behalf of Japanese and Manchurian Catholics.

The incidents in Japan and Manchuria led to the final abrogation of the prohibitions against the Chinese rites in China. Regarding China, Rome employed what might be called a theological and missiological analogy (the basis of the analogy being the actions in Japan and Manchuria), coupled with the realization that since the Chinese rites and the subsequent controversy originated in China, the prohibition against their usage also ought to be revoked in China. Thus, on December 8, 1939, during the early months of Pius XII's pontificate, the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith published an instruction entitled, *Plane Compertum Est*, and stated in the first paragraph: "It is abundantly clear (*plane compertum est*) that in the regions of the Orient some ceremonies, although they may have been involved with pagan rites in ancient times, have — with changes in customs and thinking over the course of centuries — retained merely the civil significance of piety towards or of love of the fatherland or of courtesy towards one's neighbors." Moreover, the instruction stated that missionaries to China were no longer required to take the oath against the Chinese rites. Times had changed, stated the instruction from Rome, thus making the oath unnecessary. What remained from the earlier rites prohibitions was the injunction on contentious disputes regarding the

rites, an injunction which continues to this day. On February 28, 1941, Rome sent a communiqué to the Chinese church prohibiting "casuistic discussions" of the rites because, stated the communiqué, "We live in a time of transition." The communiqué went on to say that any discussion of the rites was to be confined to a clear explanation of the 1939 Instruction; any doubts were to be left to solutions within the confessional or private consultations. What is important in this communiqué (*Mens Nostra*) is what the Congregation intends in the 1939 Instruction. States Father Minamiki: "...recognition that the rites are in a transition stage where their meaning is undergoing a change; that is, where their superstitious and religious intent is changing into a civil and secular meaning. Hence, the Propaganda Fide opted for the same procedure followed in the instruction of 1936 to the Church in Japan" (202). It should be noted that the 1939 Instruction focused on the present and the future; there was no discussion of the past by way of a review of past documents concerning the Chinese rites. The 1939 Instruction implied that the 1732 *Ex Quo Singulari* was correct in judging the rites to be religious. The Instruction, singularly brief and clear in its intent and statements, admitted of no wrong-doing in the past by anyone; no apologies were offered. The tone of the Instruction clearly indicated that what happened in the past was truly past and should be put behind. According to the Instruction, what was important was the future of the Church in China. The remaining clause prohibiting "contentious discussion" was designed to prevent another age of controversy. Controversy would only harm the best interests of the Church.

When Father Minamiki makes his transition from the Japanese and Manchurian rites situations to the rites situation in China, the reader might get the impression that Rome gratuitously decided to solve the rites question in China simply because the rites question arose there. Not so. The author of this review has discovered evidence to the contrary. Rome also based its 1939 decision on events which occurred

in China itself, events which Father Minamiki does not incorporate into his book. In 1934 the Chinese Nationalist government addressed the question of superstition and rites honoring Confucius in the freedom of religion clause of its new constitution. Speaking to the representatives of the Kuo Min Press Service on May 16, 1934, Mr. Wang Ching Wei, Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of China's Executive Yuan, stated that "reverence of the Chinese for Confucius is cultural rather than religious, and Confucianism is more accurately defined as a Philosophical school rather than as a religion. Confucius never claimed doctrinal infallibility, but that does not prevent one from rendering him the tribute of recognition which is his due as the greatest philosopher China has ever known" (Fides Press Service, June 23, 1934).

Another piece of evidence not included by Father Minamiki in his book concerns Father Pascal D'Elia, S.J.'s translation of Sun Yat-Sen's *San Minchui* in 1929. Father D'Elia, then a member of the Jesuit Sinological Bureau at Zikawei in Shanghai, translated Sun's book from Chinese into French: *Le Triple Demisme de Suen Wen*.<sup>9)</sup> A blend of republican and Confucian principles, Sun Yat-Sen's *San Minchui* (the three principles of democracy, the people, and sovereignty) concerned Chinese nationalism, the psychological, material, social, and political reconstruction of China. Father D'Elia's translation received commendatory letters from no less than Cardinal Peter Gasparri, Secretary of State under Pius XI, R. Lijdsman, C.S.S.R., secretary to Cardinal Willem Marinus Van Rossum who was then Prefect of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, and Archbishop Celso Constantini, Apostolic Delegate to China.<sup>10)</sup> These letters not only praised D'Elia's translation, but also Sun's philosophy as well, a fact which surprised China missionaries who lived under the restrictions of the Chinese rites decrees. One French-Canadian Jesuit wrote:

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9) *The Triple Demism of Sun Yat-Sen*. Wuchang, China: the Franciscan Press, 1931, reissued by the AMS Press, Inc., New York, New York, 1974.

10) *The Triple Demism of Sun Yat-Sen*, pps. xvi, xvii-xviii, xix-xxii.

About the actual religious policy of the Nationalist government, you know that many pagodas were destroyed or turned into public schools by order of the government. Nothing was done against Christian churches. So the Nationalist government is fighting against national religions, against what they call 'superstitions,' and nothing will replace them, except the cult of Sun Yat-Sen, the great Chinese leader. In the preface of a book written by a French Jesuit about Sun Yat-Sen, the Apostolic Delegate has declared that there was nothing idolatrous in this cult and that it was only a civic cult of a great benefactor of the country (This decision has surely surprised many a missionary who remembers the strong condemnations of the Church against the worship of Confucius and Chinese rites). (Father Henri Pollet, S.J., Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland, in a letter to Father Reith, S.J., New York City, September, 7, 1929).

Thus, in Rome's judgment the "cult of Sun Yat-Sen," as well as the cult of Confucius, came under the category of the civil, not the religious; in Rome's eyes Dr. Sun had transformed Confucianism into a political philosophy devoid of what Rome had previously judged to be superstition. Both Rome and China were solidly against superstition: "We live in a time of transition."

## II

One can see several historical ironies in the solution of the Chinese rites controversy, the first being that the prohibitions against the Chinese rites were never intended for Japan, but were carried over from China to Japan (as well as to the cultures of East Asia heavily influenced by China), and the second being that in a country outside of China, ecclesiastical authorities found a solution for the rites controversy. Moreover, as though to fulfill the saying, "What goes around comes around," the rites controversy had its origin with Matteo Ricci and his Jesuit colleagues in China for the purpose of inculturating Christianity in China.

The solution of the controversy began as a crisis of conscience when several Catholic students of a Jesuit university, Sophia in Tokyo, refused their reverential bow before the war dead at the Shinto Yasukuni Shrine on May 5, 1932. The Japanese students were simply being obedient to the law of the Church. The rites controversy began with the Jesuits and had the beginnings of its solution with the Jesuits, but under far different historical contexts in two different cultures. One might say that in order to win the Chinese to Christ, one first had to become Japanese, an irony that has not been lost on the Chinese who were experiencing Japanese imperialism at the time of the rites solution in 1939.

Another irony concerns Rome's rather easy accommodation with Japan's imperialistic government. Peter Hebblethwaite has remarked in his biography, *Pope John XXIII: Shepherd of the Modern World* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, and Company 1985), that Pius XI (in the words of John XXIII) "always acted on the principle that he would 'eat with the devil if the good of souls demanded it'" (420). Perhaps this statement explains Rome's seemingly easy accommodation with the imperialistic government of Japan which operated under the demonic euphemism of the "Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Moreover, Rome also sent a special representative to the Japanese Manchukuo puppet government during the 1930's. In both instances the Church clearly acted in its own self-interest and set radically different ideologies aside, whereas, ironically enough, the Church refused to pursue its own self-interest when dealing with China during the Age of Controversy under political conditions which did not threaten the Church nor the free world during that era.

One can see another ironical twist when ecclesiastical officials approached the respective governments of Japan and Manchukuo in the 1930's as to the precise meaning of the rites. These officials did precisely what the Jesuits did when they petitioned the throne of Emperor Kangxi in 1700. What was interpreted as state interference in religious matters in 1700 became a solution for the rites controversy in the 1930's. Finally,

the general principles set forth by the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in the 1930's were not all that new. In 1659 that same Roman tribunal stated:

Make no endeavor and in no way persuade these people (in the missions) to change their rites, habits and mores as long as these are not very manifestly contradictory to religion and good mores. Indeed what would be more absurd than to introduce Gaul, Spain, Italy or some other part of Europe into China? Bring not these things but the faith, which neither rejects nor harms the rites and customs of any nation provided they are not perverse but which rather desires them to remain intact.

And because it is almost the nature of men to prefer in estimation and love their own things, and especially their own nation, to things that belong to others, there exists no cause of hatred and alienation more poignant than the tampering with native customs, above all, those which men have grown accustomed to from the memory of their forefathers. Especially is this true when you substitute and bring in the mores of your country in place of those you have removed. Therefore never interchange the practices of these people with European practices; rather with great diligence become accustomed to their practices.

Admire and praise those things that merit praise; but as to what are wanting in praise, since they cannot be extolled by commendation in the form of flattery, it will be prudent not to bear judgment or at least not to condemn blindly and excessively; what remains truly perverse must be eradicated more by nods and silence than by words, and let them be plucked out by seizing the opportunity and preparing the minds to grasp the truth (31-32).

Rome required two-hundred and fifty painful years to realize its own wisdom. Regarding the purpose, function, and difficulties of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in China during the seventeenth century, Donald Lach's article is helpful.<sup>11)</sup>

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11) Donald F. Lach's, "Propaganda Fide and the China Mission: the Seven-

## III

As one reviews not only Father Minamiki's book, but also the rites controversy itself, one asks: Why and how could the Church's condemnation of the rites have taken place when approval of the rites seemed to be not only theologically sound, but also in the best interest of the Church in China? As the author points out in his book, the theological reason for the condemnation centered on Rome's judgment that the rites were superstitious. Secondly, quoting J.S. Cummins, the author states that "some modern writers tend to see the conflict in abstract terms, or as a clash between two civilizations, between East and West, although in fact the Chinese were not actively or consciously involved in the quarrel, which was first and foremost a struggle between two types of Western minds — the one traditional and conservative, the other progressive and adventurous"<sup>12)</sup> (253). Thirdly, the problems of time, weather, and distance exacerbated the conflict between Rome and China — and within China itself; communication sometimes took years between the two continents. Fourthly, jealousy was commonplace among the disputants, particularly between the Jesuits and the Dominicans, Franciscans, and the members of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, all otherwise seemingly well-intentioned and zealous religious men. Fifthly, the Jesuits had a mission policy quite different from that of other religious groups, the Jesuit policy being one of a gradual incorporation of Christian theology into the Chinese culture, whereas other religious groups opted for direct proselytization irrespective of Chinese customs.

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teenth Century," *International Symposium on Chinese-Western Cultural Interchange in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Arrival of Matteo Ricci, S.J., in China*, September 11~16, 1983, Taipei, Taiwan, 298~310.

12) J.S. Cummins, ed., *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete*. Cambridge University Press, 1962, Vol. 1, Introduction, 1.

Sixthly, all of the decision-making power resided in Rome; local expertise and judgment counted for little. Rome used European standards to judge Chinese customs on the basis of perceived similarities and differences. Those who made the decisions were largely ignorant of China's language, culture, and history. Roman theologians were theological literalists who perceived religious experience and conceived theological formulas in solely western symbol systems. Seventhly, the Church in China was too dependent upon European governments for its sustenance to, from and within China, relying too heavily upon the Portuguese *Padroado* ("spices and souls") and the Spanish *Vicariato Regio* ("gold, glory, and the Gospel") at first, and France's *mission civilisatrice* later on. Eighthly, many missionaries were blinded by China's geographical size and the greatness of China's traditions; China was big and the potential for "souls" was great. Conversions meant success and success meant progress in winning the world for Christ. Zeal for the house of the Lord ran rough shod over what the Lord had created, a different people with a different culture. The missionaries became blinded by their own quest for success and progress. The foregoing reasons this reviewer characterizes as the simple reasons as to why and how the Church's condemnation of the rites took place when approval of the rites seemed to be in the best interests of the Church and the Chinese people who chose to ask for membership in the Church.

This reviewer suggests that there might be more complex reasons for the condemnation of the rites, reasons not specifically analyzed by Father Minamiki. Europeans considered themselves to be racially, culturally, and religiously superior to the Chinese people precisely because the Chinese were non-believers. Because the Chinese were non-believers, the Europeans considered them to be of the devil. The Chinese were not Caucasian, blatant racism on the part of the Europeans. Europeans were anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic. The Europeans remembered the hordes of Genghis Khan and Attila the Hun. The papacy exercised a defensive posture regarding both its political role vis-à-vis the emerging

national states of Europe, as well as its own religious role vis-à-vis the Protestant Reformation, a "siege mentality" in the words of Father Minamiki. There was also cultural intransigence on the part of China: "China was proud. But Chinese pride was based on the long and continuous tradition and cultural heritage of the 'middle kingdom.' It was a self-sufficient and self-contained country which from the Ming dynasty on to our own day is "totalitarian and isolationist"<sup>13)</sup> Chinese culture was coterminous with the Chinese state. China as a monolithic polity proved threatening to Rome; control over Church matters would have proved difficult, for China was far away. Perhaps Rome also judged that a culture-polity identification left no room for religious freedom, as well as for religious governance.

The Church's view of itself within the context of its own historiography may have prevented accepting China as another culture with a quite different historical tradition: "That earlier historiography, typified in the extreme by Caesar Baronius in the early seventeenth century, saw the history of the Church as an even and unbroken *continuum* of holiness and doctrine from the time of the Apostles until the present. That is, it perceived no distinct 'periods' in the history of the Church and was unaware of any radical shifts in culture or religion through the centuries that affected the Church in any important way"<sup>14)</sup> From within the framework of its own historiography, the Church was thus not prepared to accept the category of historical-cultural difference in their relations with China, a country which the Church considered to be an historical and cultural anomaly. China would either bend to the Church's view of history, or not belong to the Church at all.

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13) Joseph Sebes, S.J., "A 'Bridge' between East and West: Father Matteo Ricci, S.J.: His Times, His Life, and His Method of Cultural Accommodation." *Proceedings*. Taiwan Symposium on Matteo Ricci, S.J., 1983, 7, Supplement.

14) John W. O'Malley, S.J., "The Jesuits, St. Ignatius, and the Counter-Reformation: Some Recent Studies and Their Implications for Today." *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, XIV, January, 1982, 16.

Before Ricci ever entered China, the Jesuits had the reputation of being religious Machiavellis. The Spanish Jesuit Baltasar Gracian published his book of maxims, *Oráculo Manual (The Art of Worldly Wisdom)*, during the middle of the sixteenth century. Maxims such as the following may not have endeared the Society of Jesus to enemies potential or real: "Find out each man's thumbscrew." "A shrewd man knows that others when seek him do not seek him, but their advantage in him and by him." "The truth, but not the whole truth." "Keep to yourself the final touches of your art." "Do not show your wounded finger." "The sole advantage of power is that you can do more good."<sup>15)</sup>

This reviewer also suggests that the Jesuit reputation as controversialists may have been a cause of Rome's condemnation of the Chinese rites. From their very origins Jesuits were intrepid controversialists. They were founded during an age of controversy (the Counter-Reformation), given papal sanction to carry on controversies on behalf of the Church, and highly skilled in the rhetoric of controversy. After a heated theological debate between the Jesuit Luis de Molina and the Dominican Domingo Banes which had already gone on for several years, Rome called an abrupt halt to the debate in 1604. The debate, the *De Auxiliis Controversy*, concerned reconciling grace with free will. Another Jesuit, Juan Mariana of Spain, wrote a book in 1599 entitled, *The Monarch and His Training*, dedicating it to Philip III. In his book Mariana discussed, among other things, the legality of tyrannicide and proposed that a monarch could be assassinated in good conscience (except by poisoning). When Henry III of France was assassinated, the French Court pointed to Mariana's book as a fomenting influence in the King's death. The Jesuit General, Claudio Aquaviva, sternly condemned the book and forbade Jesuits to have anything to do with tyrannicide. In the seventeenth century the

15) Baltasar Gracian, S.J., *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*. Trans. by Joseph Jacobs (1892), New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1967.

Jesuits and the Jansenists engaged in fierce theological debates. Pascal's *The Provincial Letters* (1656-1657) portrayed the Jesuits as advocating laxity in matters of moral theology. Pascal's book enjoyed a wide audience because his book was in French and Pascal was an eminent stylist. Jesuit rebuttals were written in Latin and not in French, and thus Pascal's unfair caricatures of the Jesuits prevailed. After Pascal, the Jesuits were accused of universally holding the principle of probabilism in moral theology, the source of moral laxity according to their critics. The dates of these controversies (to name but a few) should be noted, for the controversies either immediately preceded or coincided with the beginnings of Ricci in China and the subsequent Chinese rites controversy. The Jesuit controversialists in Europe, plus the Jesuit controversialists in China, might have provided the Church with more controversy than it could well tolerate and still govern with what the Church considered to be reasonable harmony and stability. Once again, zeal for the Lord might not have been appreciated by the head of the household.

Regarding the question of superstition, the Church's concern with, scrutiny and condemnation of superstition in China may well have been part of what William Monter calls "the assault on superstition" which took place in Europe between 1680 and 1725.<sup>16)</sup> The carry-over to China would have been easy enough because of Europe's preoccupation with China.<sup>17)</sup> The following works played a central role in the attack on superstitions in Europe: Benedict Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico Politicus* (1610), Pierre Bayle's *Various Thoughts...on the Occasion of the Comet which Appeared in December 1680* (1682), Jean-Baptiste Thiers' *Treatise on Superstitions according to Holy Scripture, Conciliar Decrees, and the Sentiments of Church Fathers and Theo-*

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16) *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1983.

17) Donald F. Lach's four volume work: *Asia in the Making of Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965 and 1977.

*logians* (1679), Pierre Lebrun's *Critical History of Superstitious Practices* (1702), and Pietro Giannone's *Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples* (1723). The assault on superstition, as well as reaction to the assault, was taken very seriously. For example, Giannone's book dealt with the hundred-year struggle of the Neapolitan monks in their bid to acquire wealth and power in Naples; however, what sent Giannone running from Naples to Vienna for his life was his denial that the blood of St. Januarius liquified every year on the saint's feast day. Claude Pithois (1587-1676) dedicated the whole of his scholarly life to rooting out superstition. The Council of Trent in its eighteenth session directed all bishops to suppress all forms of astrological prediction, and in 1586 Sixtus V promulgated his Bull, *Coeli et Terrae Creator Deus*, in which had, denounced astrology and summed up all of the Church's teaching against diviners and their horoscopes. Jesuits Francisco Suarez, Martin del Rio, Benedictus Pererius, and Alessandro de Angelis took the lead in the attack on astrological prediction. De Angelis was a noted astronomer and Director of Studies in the Jesuit College of Rome when he published his five books on astrology in 1615.

And the result of the Church's prohibition of the Chinese rites? Father Minamiki quotes George Dunne: "Without exaggeration, Dunne says that the Roman decisions came as a 'death blow to the cause of Christianity in China'" (220). When the Church prohibited the Chinese rites it failed to take the very means by which it could have indigenized itself in China. Thus, the Church did not become Chinese and therefore the Chinese people did not become Church to the extent desired and expected by the Church's foreign proselytizers who failed to root themselves in Chinese culture and history for fear of being condemned. Only now is the Church in China beginning to indigenize itself so that the Church can indeed become a Chinese Church, and this time without the presence of foreigners and Roman tribunal legislation.

## IV

Without necessarily agreeing to specifics, this reviewer believes that Father Minamiki would agree that certain aspects of the Chinese rites controversy have not yet been sufficiently explored and that some unsolved dimensions of the rites question are still with us. The final prohibition pertaining to "contentious discussion" of the rites question should be abrogated because it is dated. In the interests of academic freedom a free discussion of the rites controversy in its historical and contemporary aspects should be allowed. Three books will certainly provide more insight into the controversy: David E. Mungello's *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985; an English-Chinese edition of Matteo Ricci's *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* to be published in the autumn of 1985 by the Institute of Jesuit Sources (Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu, S.J., editors); Father Edward J. Malatesta, S.J., director of the Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco, is now preparing the manuscript of the late Francis A. Rouleau's study of the Jesuits' reaction within China to the Chinese rites prohibitions in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This study will certainly enlarge Rouleau's earlier work on the Chinese rites in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* and his "Maillard de Tournon, Papal Legate at the Court of Peking," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu*, 31 (1962), 264-323. The editors of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* devoted their April, 1985, issue to the many China mission history projects now going on in the world. These mission history projects are sure to yield new information on the rites question and its effects. A thorough study of the rites controversy in Korea and in other East Asian countries has yet to come to the attention of the international scholarly world. In Korea, for example, the Japanese arrested priests in 1944 and held them captive on

the charge that the priests did not make the required reverence before the Shinto shrines of imperial Japan in Korea. The rites question in Korea has recently arisen in present-day opposition by some to shrines honoring Tangun, the mythical founder of Korea, shrines which critics say would be invitations to idol worship. Some Protestant groups in Korea still regard ancestor reverence (*Chesa*) as a pagan ritual. In the opinion of this reviewer, Father Minamiki's excellent book is a step to what should be a thorough, five-volume study of the Chinese rites controversy, volumes which cover each of the four eras of the rites question, with a fifth volume devoted to a translation of all the pertinent documents.

Finally, the solution of the rites controversy, at least in part, can be seen as a prelude to the theology of the local church emphasized by the Second Vatican Council, a Church council which was unique in that it found nothing to condemn. Tension still exists between Rome and the local churches regarding faith and culture policies and the loci of decision-making; a more extensive autonomy needs to be given to the local churches. Not to thoroughly understand the Chinese rites controversy will mean a repetition of the controversy's errors. For example, documents in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* should be published in Asian languages in addition to Western languages. The past is gone and one cannot judge the mistakes of the past by present criteria, but taking a cue from the 1939 Instruction *Plane Compertum Est* which emphasized the present and the future, "it is abundantly clear" that present-day and future policies and decisions should be well informed and grounded by the lessons of the rites question. Thus, inculturation (Korean: *to-chak-hwa*) needs more attention, not only on the part of Rome, but also on the part of the local churches. The Faith and Culture Commission created by John Paul II is a healthy development in the area of the relation between faith and culture, but for there to be authentic dialogue, the Church at Rome itself must also become inculturated precisely because of its contact with Churches of other cultures. It behooves the communion of the Churches, including the Church at Rome, to understand, respect,

and encourage the Church's communal particularities. As Karl Rahner, S.J., has remarked, our world is fast becoming a world Church; the hegemony of European culture with its North American annexes is ending.<sup>18)</sup> Not to acknowledge a world Church will be to continue in a Western culture-Christianity, a faith-culture rather than faith within culture.

To return to China where the rites controversy began, there are two groups of contemporary Chinese Catholics, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association dedicated to its self-government, self-support, and self-propagation and Catholics who have maintained their sole allegiance to the Church at Rome and who have suffered because of that allegiance.

In fact, all Chinese Christians have suffered because of their belief. One cannot speak of 'two' Catholic in China, but this question remains: How far will the doors of both Rome and China open for the sake of reconciliation between Chinese Catholics so that there can be a truly Chinese Church rather than the Church in China. The Chinese Rites Controversy might just be a source, as well as a paradigm, for reconciliation to take place. At least, ecclesiastical leaders should avoid the errors committed by the Church during the rites controversy. The Modern Age of the Chinese rites controversy is not over. To quote the Instruction of 1939, *Plane Compertum Est*, and the *Mens Nostra* of 1941: "It is abundantly clear" that "we live in a time of transition." From China a new understanding of the Church, the Church as a communion of all of the Churches, just might be in the process of being borne.

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18) "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies*, 40, December, 1979, 716~727.