

The Jesuit Mission in East Asia Vision or Mirage?

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The Jesuit mission to Japan and China in the 16th. and 17th. centuries has long excited interest and controversy: by its admirers it is acclaimed as a pioneer of a wholly new approach to mission, ultimately vindicated, for Catholics, by Vatican II; and viewed by its detractors as a betrayal of the full vigour of the Christian message by its willingness to search for value and truth in others cultures. Two notable contributions to the debate have recently appeared:

Ross, A.C., *A Vision Betrayed. The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1572*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1994, and Mungello, D.E., *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

Ross, a lecturer in the history of mission at Edinburgh University, gives us a brisk and lively account of the Jesuit Mission in Japan and China. It is likely to become essential reading for any serious student. Jesuit readers in particular will take pleasure in its generous endorsement of the mission's rationale and methods, as well as its verdict that it was a success, prematurely cut short by xenophobic fears in Japan; and China and by incomprehension and ignorance in Rome.

The 'vision' which, if not betrayed, was at least deeply suspected by European Christians of the time, was of a church disengaged from its connections with colonial adventurism and set free to accommodate itself to the cultural preferences of East Asian societies. The mission was predicated on the drawing of a distinction between the incidentals of European culture and the essentials of the Faith. It was a rejection of the earlier Iberian missions to America, Africa and South Asia which were an extension of the 'Reconquista' of their countries from the Muslims. They were underpinned by the unitary concept of 'Church and Throne' which meant that, whatever the ideals of the missionaries, in reality the Kings of Spain and Portugal enjoyed unlimited rights over their 'colonial' churches and often exercised these rights to the detriment of the mission. The Pope

was little more than a spectator. The Society of Jesus, a product of the CounterReformation which strove for the reassertion of papal power, placed itself in direct obedience to the Pope; Jesuit mission hoped to advance under a papal flag distancing itself from the political and commercial expansion of Europe, and particularly from the 'conquistador' mentality of the Spanish, identified by Alessandro Valignano, architect-in-chief of the Jesuit mission, as the major impediment to the reception of Christianity in the East. Ross does not linger long over the ironies to which this subsequently gave rise: that the Jesuits partially liberated mission from the grip of Iberian monarchs only to find themselves enthralled to new masters, the rulers of Japan and China, whose whims could mean life or death; that it was the papacy itself which, in the Chinese Rites affair, acted as 'hanging judge' for its fledgling mission.

Ross sees the mission as animated by the urge "to integrate Christianity and indigenous culture so that there developed a pattern of Christian life which was Japanese or Chinese and not a replication of European Christianity" (p.204). This vision, so much at odds with the spirit of the age, is partly attributed by Ross to the effects of the Ignatian method of training which was "so rigorous and profoundly effective that it enabled individual Jesuits to be secure psychologically and spiritually so that they could shake off conventional notions and rely on their own novel solutions to local problems, even if it meant going against the local establishment of Church or State." (p.xiv). Of course this was true of the best of their number and Ross does not obscure the fact that many Jesuits did not share 'the vision'; these, however, were usually Iberian Jesuits, which Ross cites as evidence of his second explanation: that 'the vision' grew out of Italian humanism, the leading figures in the mission being almost all Italians, although later joined by French and German Jesuits. Italians were free of the 'conquistador' mentality, and were still touched by the afterglow of the Italian Renaissance despite the more sombre mood of the Counter-Reformation. It was the Jesuits who patronised Galileo and fostered the 'New Science' of the early 17th century.¹

The new concept of mission was also a result of the encounter with the 'higher civilisations' of Japan and China. In America, along the coasts of Africa, among the peoples of the east coast of India and the Spice Islands and as far as the Philippines, missionaries had come across only simple societies, each of which was a 'tabula rasa' on which Christianity could be written in bold type; in Japan and China, by contrast, the Jesuits met with 'white' people, 'white' in that they exhibited the accomplishments of European Societies. Francis Xavier and Alessandro Valignano were

persuaded that these societies had to be taken seriously in a way no other non-European society ever had been (including Muslim societies which had been dismissed a 'satanic' because of their anti-Christian thrust). Faced with drastically new realities the Jesuits rethought mission.

Ross sets Valignano at the centre of the mission. Without his "insight, imagination and determination" a lot less would have been achieved. He makes some large claims for Valignano: that he shaped the mission "in such a way as to challenge the Eurocentric understanding not only of Christianity but also of history and culture" and that his strategy broke free from precedent "not only in practice but at its deepest theological and philosophical level." (p.30) The reader will judge for himself whether this was so. Whereas in China he was able to direct "a mission that was his from the beginning", in Japan he was under greater constraint, "having to work with what was already in being, reshaping attitudes and structures as best he could." (p.32)

In Japan Valignano found a lot to reshape: he held Cabral, the Portuguese head of mission, responsible for failing to develop the mission along the lines set out by Francis Xavier; he had tried to reverse the policy of adaptation of life-style to the Japanese way; he had sown seeds of racial distrust between the missionaries and converts and encouraged dubious mass conversions of peasants under the 'persuasion' of *daimyos* (local feudal chiefs), especially in Kyushu. By contrast, he took heart from the work of Fr. Organtino Gnecci-Soldi near Kyoto who, out of a well-informed and deep respect for Japanese culture, lived a life as close to the Japanese style as possible. (It was, interestingly, Organtino who advised Valignano that Japan would be won for Christianity if only a hundred Jesuits were sent, provided that they were all Italians, whose 'modo soave' was the best way to win the people.) Overall, Valignano concluded, as a result of our not adapting to their customs, two serious evils followed, as indeed I realised from experience. They were the chief sources of many others: First we forfeited the respect and esteem of the Japanese, and second, we remained strangers, so to speak, to the Christians." (p.63)

His subsequent account of the mission, its persecution and suppression leads Ross to conclude that, developing along the lines set out by Valignano, it was "one of the successful missions": in one hundred years its numbers had risen to 500,00 despite increasingly fierce bouts of persecution. It could be destroyed only by utter ruthlessness, and for two hundred years thereafter an orchestrated campaign of anti-Christian propaganda was thought the only guarantee against re-infection.

Ross sees the Amakusa and Shimabara Rebellions of 1637-38, in which some 30,000 Christians were finally overwhelmed and destroyed by Tokugawa forces as “proof of the effectiveness of 90 years of Jesuit activity in Kyushu”. (p.102) He is impatient of attempts to explain the rebellion in economic and social categories; the rebels were “Christians, fighting with a specifically Christian inspiration” which was something “that came from their own experience” rather than from Jesuit instruction. (The rebels were exclusively Japanese, without any foreign involvement). It was a “messianic revolt” rooted in a “people’s religion”, compelling evidence that Christianity had become “domesticated to meet the needs of the situation of ordinary Christians in ways not laid down by the official theology of those who brought the Christian gospel to them or of the existing hierarchies.” (p. 103) Ross argues that it is proof that Christianity had truly penetrated Japanese life, and that the rebellion is “a confirmation that acculturation, assimilation, indiginisation or whatever the term used to describe the reality of Christianity’s integration with a new culture, has occurred.” (p. 103)

Some will question, however, whether this claim is warranted by the evidence. Others will ask if ‘acculturation’, ‘assimilation’, ‘indiginisation’ can be loosely thrown together under the umbrella of ‘integration’, and might like to draw finer distinctions. The Jesuits clearly broke new ground in the policy of ‘accomodation’: missionaries should conform to local custom in matters of life-style; the hierarchical structure of the Jesuits should replicate exactly the hierarchical distinctions familiar to Japanese; converts should lay aside only those local customs which were in conflict with Christian values. This was set down in Valignano’s “Il ceremoniale per i missionari del Giappone” of 1580. The scope of the policy, however, is limited: it is to allow the missionaries to blend into the local society without appearing to be unassimilably foreign, and thus to gain a hearing. Accomodation is a necessary condition for ‘integration’ but it is not the end itself.

Was the church ‘indigenised’? The answer is both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Some 300,000 Japanese were Christians in 1614 when the systematic persecution began; despite the persecution, the 2,000 martyrs, and the expulsion of some missionaries, numbers did not fall. As there were never more than 150 foreign missionaries, evangelization was largely in the hands of the Japanese. At the cutting edge of growth were the *Imaos* (Jesuit scholastics), *Dojuku*; a kind of auxiliary clergy, celibate and in vows but not ordained,

and assigned to a variety of ancillary tasks, and the *Kambo*, the local lay leaders who organised the ‘confraternities’ which proved so sturdy under persecution. This might be thought a new local church structure, specifically adapted to local needs, self-sustaining, self-motivating, less dependent on foreign direction. But was it? Despite the oft-proclaimed call for a local priesthood, it was only in 1602, 50 years after Xavier’s arrival in Kagoshima, that the first Japanese Jesuit and the first Japanese secular priest were ordained. The clergy remained overwhelmingly European. Japanese resentment against discrimination in this area was a strong and divisive force. (It was a strong sense of resentment that led to the apostasy in 1609 of Fabian Fukano, the foremost Japanese Jesuit apologist.) The extensive use of the *dojuku* and *kambo* looks less like a considered policy for the creation of ‘indigenised’ structures and more like an improvisation necessary to deal with the chronic shortage of both European Jesuits and of money. If there had been more money there would have been more foreign priests. The Tridentine Church was resolutely clerical; it had no place for lay responsibility, a Protestant ‘fad’. Jesuits shared these views. If a church had developed in Japan with a much greater role for the local non-clerical leadership, we can be sure that Rome would have extinguished it.

The claim that the mission in Japan broke free from former practice “at the deepest theological and philosophical level” seems also questionable. For a process of ‘inculturation’ to have begun, a serious engagement with the principal elements of Japanese belief and thought would have been necessary. As Confucianism had not yet attained dominance in Japan it was Buddhism and Shinto that counted. The Jesuits found little to admire in either. From the start there was a confrontational approach to Buddhism: in Kyushu there was a good deal of temple and shrine destruction by Christians, and Buddhist monks living in Christian areas had marriage forced upon them. Valignano eventually urged the study of Buddhism and Shinto in seminaries; one suspects that this was so that they could better be refuted in polemical exchanges. It is difficult to see how a process of ‘integration’ or ‘inculturation’ could take place until a more positive evaluation of Japanese thought and sensibility was arrived at—similar to Ricci’s appreciation of Chinese thought.²

How far in the future an integration of Christianity with Japanese culture lay we will never know; in the early 17th century Christianity came into collision with the emerging Tokugawa state ideology—Shinkoku (literally, ‘the country of the gods’). This ideology subordinated all religious institutions to the interests of the State. It was the work of the three ‘Great Unifiers’ of Japan, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa

Ieyasu, who aimed at the cutting down of all sources of opposition or dissent whether secular or religious. Principal targets were the daimyo, overmighty subjects entrenched in their fiefdoms, and the Buddhists, particularly the warrior monks of Mt. Hiei and the *Ikko* of the True Pure Land Sect, who constituted a state within a state. Over time the Buddhist sects became agencies of state control, a kind of 'spiritual police'. It was under daimyo protection that Christianity had first taken root; its foreign origin, suspicions about its connections with Spanish imperial ambitions, and its rapid growth made it increasingly suspect to Shinkoku thought. It had to be uprooted. As Ross notes, this ideology had no pedigree; it was a fabrication of the 16th century, but it was to become central to Japanese ideas about the proper relationship between religion and the state. It justified the demonisation of Christianity in Edo literature for the next 200 years.³

Looking beyond the 17th century when Ross closes his account, we can see that it was the Shinkoku ideology which, in the Meiji period, provoked a second bout of persecution, this time of the Buddhists, underpinned the Shintoist civil religion of the years between 1870 and 1945, and today is still alive and well in its secularised form as 'Nihonjinron' (Japanist) literature. It is perhaps this ideology which, at the time of the Jesuit mission and since, has done most to frustrate the reception of Christianity by imputing to it a 'foreignism' incompatible with a proper Japanese identity.

In China Ricci realised that the traditional methods would make little headway as "the Chinese look upon all foreigners as illiterate and barbarous and refer to them in just those terms. They even disdain to learn anything from the books of outsiders because they believe that all true science and philosophy belong to them alone." he wrote in his diary. His strategy was a response to the implications of this. Other features of Chinese life also posed problems for the evangelist: the supreme importance of the written word over the spoken work as a conveyor of ideas made preaching an act of folly; official suspicion of all religious groups as potentially subversive suggested that a religion of miracles and magic attracting a following among the poor would not be tolerated; the crucifix itself would be seen as a fetish. Ricci had to forge new tools of evangelism. He realised that progress would be very slow; before his death he commented that he had "only opened the door" .A hundred years later the mission was closed. At the end a very good account of the development of that mission, Ross analyses the forces which destroyed it: the cross-currents of European policies, Jansenist and Gallican influences, squabbles among

the Religious Orders, and the mounting unease of Rome. "It was", he concludes, "ultimately the Church's denial of the validity of the way of Valignano and Ricci that led to (the Emperor) Kangxi and China's rejection of Christianity." (p. 176)

Rome's disavowal of Jesuit methods doubtless was crucial. The legate to China, de Tournon, commented that the mission would have to be destroyed before it could be reformed. But a suspicion remains that, whatever the attitude of Rome, the mission itself was in difficulties by the early 18th century, and that China was proving impermeable to Christian ideas. Ross makes it clear that he does not intend to enter the philosophical and theological debate on 'Confucianism and Christianity' to which Gernet, Rule and others have contributed.⁴ (p.xvi)

Mungello, already a substantial contributor to the study of the interplay of ideas between China and the West,⁵ sheds new light on this debate. He breaks new ground in his fascinating account of the Christian community in Hangzhou in the 17th. century under the direction of Frs. Martini and Intorcetta. (The church itself, built in 1662 is again a Catholic church today, and Mungello includes photographs of it.) This account is a prelude to an analysis of the writings of Zhang Xingyao (1633-17 15) a literatus convert, baptised in 1678. Of his several works the most substantial are his *Similarities and Differences between the Lord of Heaven Teaching and the Literati Teaching*, begun in 1672 and under constant revision for 40 years, and his *History*, a massive work of 1700 pages. His works were not printed but circulated in manuscript.

Mungello believes that the significance of Zhang lies in the fact that he belonged to the third generation of Chinese Christians who were less dependent on their Jesuit teachers than had been, for example, the 'Three Pillars' of the first generation, Li Zhizhao, Xu Guangqi and Yang Tingyun. The Jesuits had been excellent teachers who were not content merely to transmit information but encouraged their students to go beyond the thinking of their teachers."⁶ Zhang was of a new generation able to think new thoughts about the harmonisation of Christianity and Confucianism, and so "he carried forward the inculturation of Christianity into Chinese culture." (p.18) 'Inculturation' he sees as "the absorption of Christianity into a culture to the degree that it not only finds expression in the elements of that culture, but also becomes an animating force that transforms the culture." (p.2)

Mungello argues that Zhang departed significantly from the received Jesuit view. Ricci had maintained that 'original', uncorrupted Confucianism was a philosophy that contained little that was incompatible

with Christianity. It was analogous to Aristotelianism in that it could provide the materials out of which a Chinese expression of Christian truth could be made. This 'original' Confucianism had, however, been obscured by an overlay of Buddhism, and in particular by the neo-Confucianism of the Song period, which had used Buddhist metaphysical categories to arrive at an interpretation of Confucianism irreconcilable with Christian faith. Zhang did not share this hostility to neo-Confucianism but rather saw his conversion as anchored in it. For Zhang, moreover, the Lord of Heaven Teaching (Christianity) was not a foreign import to China. The 'ancient truths' had been revealed at the same time in both East and West. The same God worshipped. "Zhang traced the Lord of Heaven Teaching to impeccably orthodox figures in the Confucian tradition, including the three legendary Emperors, Yao, Shun and Yu; the founder of the Shang dynasty, King Tang, the founders of the Zhou dynasty, Kings Wen and Wu, the exemplary model of selfless service to the State, the Duke of Zhou; and Confucius. Zhang believed that these sages had all transmitted the knowledge of revering Heaven." (p.82)

In the East, the teaching had been undermined by Buddhism but salvage work was begun by the Song Neo-Confucians. In the West, however, the teaching was not lost; indeed, it was improved upon 'by the revelation of Christ'. The task of the Jesuits was not, therefore, to introduce to the Chinese a new and foreign religion, a notion repugnant to the Chinese sense of self-sufficiency, but to help them recover their own ancient religion and their former God. "Zhang did not see Christianity as a foreign religion which surpassed Christianity. Rather he saw the ways in which Christianity transcended Confucianism as a form of completion or fulfillment of elements already present in China since early antiquity." (p.101) In Zhang's view Christianity was a restoration and fulfillment of the ancient Chinese religious tradition. One wonders whether many Christians, even in Jesuit circles, could have endorsed this view.

In what ways did Zhang find that the teaching of 'the great sage who had transcended human fortune and misery' (Jesus) had supplemented Confucianism? Mungello shows that Zhang believed that it deepened moral self-cultivation by promoting self-examination; it emphasised 'honour' rather than wealth as the determinant of our reward in Heaven; it directed attention to 'what is distant' (the afterlife) rather than to our daily needs; it encouraged the overcoming of our selfish desires, even to the point of self-sacrifice, by affirming the reality of eternal life. In support of this Zhang was able, by virtue of his elaborate training as a literatus, to cite evidence which no Jesuit could have commanded: The Jesuits relied on the

Four Books whereas Zhang made extensive use of the Five Classics and a wealth of historical illustration, thus establishing a more ample basis for the harmonisation of Confucianism and Christianity.

Zhang was primarily a historian and it is on his massive *History* that his reputation in China has always rested. “It is his extensive use of Chinese history to support the inculturation of Christianity in China that makes his work unique.” (p. 102) Although the *History* contains few direct references to Christianity, “it contains one of the pillars of his argument for the inculturation of Christianity into China, namely his criticisms of Buddhism and Daoism.” (p. 144) The betrayal by Buddhists and Daoists of the ‘Ancient Truths’ had left the way clear for ‘the teachers from the West’ to assist in the recovery of the ancient way.

Zhang was then both Christian apologist and Confucian prophet, summoning his people back to the true path. The *History* with all its subtlety and erudition, might have served, Mungello things, as a “Trojan horse for facilitating the inculturation of Christianity into China.” (p.147)

My few comments can do little more than hint at the riches that await the reader of Mungello’s book which will take its place as a major contribution to our knowledge. Some may question, however, the confidence with which he speaks of ‘inculturation’, as if substantial progress had been made. One difficulty is in accepting that inculturation could take place on such a selective reading of Christianity. I was left with the impression that on those rare occasions when Zhang did refer to beliefs such as Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection and the Church, they were not integrated with the main thrust of his work, which was to demonstrate the congruity of the Confucian and Christian moral visions. Zhang had little to work on: he would have been familiar with only those few selected passages of Scripture which the Jesuits had translated for the Prayer-book of 1625; the diversity and depth of the theological tradition would have been entirely unknown, as would the history of the Church (Zhang wrote innocently that the Church had preserved unsullied for a thousand years the moral standards of the Teaching!) He does not seem to have had much notion of the Christian experience being a corporate as well as personal one. Can inculturation take place if all that is available is a very carefully edited version of the faith?

There may have been a deep contradiction at the heart of what the Jesuits were trying to achieve. Sebes has suggested that as Ricci realised “that the Chinese world view was a global one in which science,

technology, ethics and philosophy formed an organic whole”, he tried to present Christianity as a similar ‘world-view’⁷. If this was so then it followed that those features of Christianity which marked it off as a ‘religion’ had to be obscured. Hence the disassociating of Christianity from Buddhism. But there is an inconsistency here:

Christianity could not be both a ‘religion’, as it traditionally understood itself, and an element in a world-view. Zurcher has pointed out a parallel inconsistency: in China the roles of ‘priest’ and ‘literatus’ were sharply distinct and incompatible.⁸ The Jesuits wanted to be both. It was not possible. Was it any more possible for Christianity to be both a ‘religion’ and also the philosophical keystone of an overarching world-view?

Mungello tells us that “Zhang viewed the Heavenly teaching as involving a unity of church and state in regard to China.... His view was based on the Confucian perspective in which separation of church and state would have been undesirable, because it would have violated the cosmological unity that existed between Heaven, earth and man.” (p.116) Quite so; in China the public domain was reserved for Confucianism alone; Buddhism and Daoism were matters of private concern, to be licensed, patronised, manipulated or persecuted according to Imperial whim. It is not surprising, then, that a literatus like Zhang had little sense of a ‘community of believers’; it would have relegated Christianity to the status of a sect and excluded it from the public domain, whereas his purpose was to portray it as China’s ancient wisdom recovered. Had his views taken root, Christianity might have been little more than an elevating influence on the official ideology rather than a distinctive force in its own right. Paradoxically one could argue that this would have been a partial ‘sinification’ of Christianity in so far as no regime, from Zhang’s day to the present, has shown much indulgence to any competitors with the prevailing ideology, whether it was Confucianism or its successors, Nationalism and Maoism.

But Zhang’s views were not to have a future, not only because of papal intervention, but also, as Mungello shows, because few literati were any longer interested in the Heavenly Teaching. By the mid-17th. century hostility was mounting. The Jesuits staked all on a penetration of the literati class whose patronage would both confer respectability and provide shelter against enemies. By 1719 not a single eminent gentleman in Hangzhou was a Christian; converts came from the lower strata. The rug had been pulled from under the Jesuits, who, henceforward, had to rely directly on Imperial protection which was extended to them increasingly in return for their scientific services. In early Manchu China the literati turned to orthodox

forms of Confucianism, and the Emperors sponsored the Song Neo-Confucianism so suspect to the Jesuits. So much so that the Jesuit Fr. Bouvet abandoned Confucianism as Christianity's 'dialogue partner' in favour of the *I Ching*.

In this context the edict of toleration granted by the Kangxi Emperor in 1692, giving the Jesuits the right to teach their beliefs and allowing Christians freedom of worship, cannot be seen as unqualified vindication of Valignano and Ricci, as Ross would have it. It was the result of a vigorous Jesuit counter-offensive to use their personal high standing with the Emperor to extract a measure of protection in the face of mounting hostility. By declaring that Christianity was not a 'subversive' sect, it was put on an equal footing with Buddhism and Daoism. But that was something rather less than what Ricci and Zhang had worked for. Moreover, the Edict was a grace-and-favour concession, and as Mungello tells us, "appears to have been primarily the work of Manchus on or near the throne." (p.64) The hostility of the literati was not assuaged and "it was only a matter of time before the negative attitudes of the literati towards Christianity resurfaced in the monarch's political policies." (p.64) The provocations offered by the papal representatives, de Tournon, Maigrot and Mezzabara were enough to prove the literati right and to prod the emperor into prohibition of Christian activity.

The erosion of literati interest, together with the fact that the Christians numbered only some 300,000 invites the conclusion that Lord of Heaven teaching no longer met any very great need in Chinese society:⁹ the literati had turned elsewhere and the religious needs of the masses were amply catered for by Buddhism and Daoism. Missions make little headway unless they serve some clearly felt need.

Ricci acknowledged that he had only opened the door. To be truly inculturated in China, Christianity would probably have had to follow the trajectory of Buddhism, which over centuries, underwent 'sinification' until the point was reached at which the Chinese made their own outstanding contributions to the practice of the Dharma. Historians of the Christianisation of medieval Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire have shown how prolonged and incomplete was the mission to the 'Barbarians'.¹⁰ In its encounter with Germanic and Celtic societies the 'Ancient Christianity' of the Graeco-Roman world was just as much transformed as it was the transformer. Barbarian values and Barbarian 'Rites', like Chinese 'Rites' later, seemed incompatible with Christianity, but gradually, by 'skillful means' (*Upaya* in Buddhist terms) they were accommodated; for example the values of warrior societies, only thinly dis-

guised in the concept of the 'Christian knight', animated the Crusades and still flourished in the Conquistador mentality that Valignano so deplored.

When Catholic mission resumed in the 19th. century the Valignano-Ricci approach was discredited; the Church was unblushingly 'foreign'. The Church built by the Jesuits in Hangzhou in 1622 was confiscated in 1731 and served as a Tian Hou (Goddess of the Sea) temple, while the chapel for women was converted into a Guanyin temple. It was restored to the Society in 1862, but was not re-dedicated as 'The Church of the Saviour' as it had been known, but as 'The Church of the Immaculate Conception'; a doctrine perhaps not immediately accessible to the Chinese mind.

As an 'envoi' Mungello speculates that inculturation may have been decisively moved forward by the Cultural Revolution which cut off ties with foreign Christians. As far as Catholics are concerned it does not seem that substantial progress has yet been made. More significant, however, may be other developments: the emasculation of Buddhism, the collapse of Confucianism and its successor ideology, Maoism, and in the last decade the apparent erosion of all values and the descent into a 'war of each against all', may together have created that 'felt need' which was missing in the 17th. century.

Each in his different way, Ross and Mungello have given us spirited and scholarly accounts of the Jesuit enterprise, and deserve to be widely read. Was it all a 'vision', betrayed in its own age but whose time is about to come? Or was it a 'mirage' fated to be dispelled on exposure to East Asian particularity? Perhaps we should echo the sentiments of Zhou Enlai who, on being asked his opinion about the importance of the French Revolution, replied, "It's still too early to say."

NOTES

- 1 Prominent among Galileo's opponents were the Dominicans who supervised the Inquisition. They had been displaced by the Jesuits as the intellectual elite of the Church and their hostility to the Jesuits played its part too in the Chinese Rites dispute.
- 2 For a more extended discussion than Ross allows himself of the relationship between Christian values and Japanese culture see Fujita, N.S., *Japan's Encounter with Christianity*, New York, Paulist press, 1991.
- 3 For a forceful statement of the view that Christianity was almost entirely incompatible with Japanese culture see Ebson, George, "The Cross and the Sword: Patterns of Momoyama History", in Elison, G., and Smith, Bardwell L., *Warlords, Artists and Commoners, Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, Honolulu, Hawaii University Press, 1981; and Elison, George, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1973.

- 4 Gernet, Jacques, *China and the Christian Impact*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1985; Rule, Paul, *K'ung Tzu or Confucius, The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986; Young, John D., *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong Univeristy Press, 1983.
- 5 Mungello, D.E., *Curious Land: Jesuit Accomodation and the Origins of Sinology*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
- 6 For a study of thought of Yang Tingyun who took the first steps in expressing Christian ideas in a Chinese idiom see Standaert, N., *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China*, Leiden, Brill, E.J., 1988: and Standaert, N., "Inculturation and Chinese-Christian Contacts in Late Ming China", in *Ching Feng* 34 (4) (December 1991)
- 7 Sebes, Joseph, S.J., "The Precursors of Ricci" in Ronan, C.E., and Oh, Bonnie B.C., *East meets West, The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1988.
- 8 Zurcher, Erik, *Bouddhisme, Christianisme et société chinoise*, Paris, Julliard, 1990.
- 9 For a discussion of what interested the literati of an earlier generation in Christianity see Peterson, Willard J. "Why did they become Christians? Yang Ting-yun, Li Chih-tsaio, and Hsu Kuang-chi." in Ronan and Oh (op.cit. note 7).
- 10 Hillgarth, J.N., (ed) *Christianity and Paganism, 350- 750, The Conversion of Western Europe*, Philadelphia 1986.