Asian Christian Writers in the 16th-18th Centuries

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The first part of this bibliography was published in the previous issue of Inter-Religio (No. 25). In that issue, the data covered Korea, Philippines, Sri-Lanka and Vietnam. In this issue, John England focuses on China.

PART 2
A SELECTION FROM CHINA

Sixteenth to seventeenth centuries:

Writings by Chinese Christians in the period include letters, essays and treatises, dialogues, poetry and memoirs. Amongst these should be noted:

1. “The letters of Antonio” (Chinese companion of Francis Xavier), written from Cochin, 1554. Written two years after the death of Xavier, it gives the full story of Xavier’s last months. The original appeared in Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu II, 894-6; Many parts of the text are translated in St Francis Xavier by James Broderick, London 1952, 524-526.

Amongst the Chinese colleagues of Matteo Ricci and Michelle Ruggieri were:

2. Li Chih-tsao (c.1540-1630) who completed the Tien-hsueh chu han (First Anthology of Christian Learning) 6 vols. (Taipei, Hsueh-sheng, 1966). A collection of writings by the Jesuits and their colleagues concerning Christianity and science. Li also wrote many prefaces for the Jesuit writings which he edited. Others who have also contributed to these include Xu Xu-chen, Zhang Wen-dao and Yang Ting-yun (below).

3. Yang Tin-yun (1557-1627) was both a Neo-Confucian scholar and an orthodox Christian and his works are central to the dialogue between Neo-Confucianism and Christianity. His writings, from the years 1617-1627 include:
A full study of Yang’s life and thought is provided by Nicholas Standaert in Yang Ting Yun - Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China (Leiden, Brill, 1988).

4. Hsu Kuang-chi (d. 1633) was one of the most prolific of seventeenth century Christian writers, not only expounding aspects of Christianity and Confucianism but also the responsibilities of government for peasant welfare and reform, agricultural methods and scientific processes. The main sources for his religious and political thought are found in:


— Hsü-shih pao-yen (Kitchen Talks of Mr. Hsü), 1617+ Shanghai, Zikawei Cathedral Collections, 1933), 5 chuan.


Other writings on political and economic issues are included in Huang Ming ching-shih wen pien (Collected Essays on Statecraft under the Ming Dynasty) edited by Ch’en Tzu-lung (1608-1647), published in 1638. A concise study
of Hsü’s work is given in John D. Young’s *Confucianism and Christianity—The First Encounter* Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1983.

5. Lo Wen-tsao (1615-1690), baptized Gregory Lopez. The first Chinese Roman Catholic Bishop to be consecrated (1685), and a Dominican supporter of the Jesuit approach to Ancestral Rites. His principal writings on these were:

—*Tractatus de cultu Confucio et paerentibus mortuis a Sin is exibito*. First written in Chinese in December 1681, revised and enlarged edition published in Shanghai, Church of the Jesuit Fathers, 1686, later translated into Latin.

—Four letters in Latin which are extant from the years 1682-85: to Philip Couplet S.J.; to Pope Innocent XI; to the Cardinals of the Congregation de Propaganda; and to the Master of the Dominican Order.


Catholic Christians in this period who were widely known as poets include:


7. Wu Li, alias Wu Yü-shan (1632-1718). An acknowledged master of early Ch’ing dynasty painting who also pioneered a Chinese Christian poetry which united traditional forms and orthodox Christian theology. This is found in:


—*Mo-ching shih-ch’ao* (Inkwell Poetry) in Hsiao-shih shan-fang ts’ungshu (Pebble Cottage Series) edited by Ku Hsiang, 1874.

The most recent study of Wu Li giving also his collected poetry is that of Jonathan Chaaves *Singing the Source — Nature and God in the Poetry of the Chinese Painter Wu Li*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1993.

9. Expatriate authors in China who studied Chinese religion and culture as the context for Christian mission notably include:


10. The writings of Li Ma-tou (Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610) include:


11. Writings of Ricci’s Jesuit colleagues or successors include:

i) Adam Schall (1591-1666) *Historia Relatio de ortu et progressu fidei orthodoxae*
in regno Chinensi (Ratisbon, August Hanckwitz, 1672) and Lettrés et memoires d'Adam Schall edited by Henri B. Maitre (Tientsin, Hautes Etudes, 1942)


iii) Ferd. Verbiest (1623-88) Pu-Te-i-Pien (A rebuttal of the “I could not do otherwise”) a debate in two parts, co-authored by Luis Buglio, establishing the Jesuit understanding of the Master of Tien (Peking, 1665-70).

12. Together with the volumes listed under (8) above, other sources of valuable studies include:

—Alvaro Semmedo (1585-1685?) Imperio de la Chine: i cultura evangelica en el por los religios de las companhia de Jesus. Madrid, I. Sanchez, 1642.


—Anastaas van deen Wyngaert, and others Sinica Franciscana Florence/Rome, 1929-1975, 8 volumes.

Eighteenth Century

Few Chinese Christian writings appear to have survived from the eighteenth century when there were severe persecutions. Those extant include:


15. Amongst the French Jesuits:

—Prémare (ca. 1666-1734) wrote pamphlets in fluent Chinese used by
both Protestants and Catholics, as well as the lexicon Notitia.

—Antoine Gaubi (d. 1759) translated Tang Annals, a life of Ghenghis Khan, and the Shu Ching, and wrote many treatises on scientific and theological subjects.

—J.A.M. de Moyriac de Mailla wrote the extensive Histoire Générale de la Chine in 3 volumes (Paris, 1777-1780). François Nod translated Mencius (c. 1705) and Joseph M. Amiot prepared a Vita Confucii (c. 1760).

16. Amongst ‘non-Christian’ sources which include Christian elements, the Shen Hsien Tung Chien, a Taoist work written c. 1700, and published in 1787 includes an account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (Chinese Repository 18, 1850, 498-502).