

Brittany Hickman
 Dr. Steven Smith
 History of Christian Thought
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Lost in Translation: The Chinese Rites Controversy

In the beginning of this year, two conservators from the Field Museum in Chicago revealed a recently restored 17th century Chinese scroll (see Fig 1). On first glance it resembles most images of the Madonna holding the baby Jesus, but on closer examination, it reveals that Jesus is of Chinese descent. Though it has not been adequately studied yet, some scholars suggest that the scroll is a link that shows how the Madonna was adapted from the Chinese goddess of mercy named Guanyin (Grossmen <<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com>>). Though many questions remain about the artist, the scroll itself is a powerful symbol. Not only does this scroll provide insight on the enculturation of Christianity into Chinese culture, but also it epitomizes the unique blending of ideologies, which was occurring when this scroll was painted in the 17th century.

Fig. 1 Nishio Conservation Studio

China has a unique introduction to Christianity. This is largely because of the radical approach that the Jesuits applied to missionary work (Dunne 12). Jesuit missionaries tried to integrate Christianity into the culture rather than presenting it as a foreign religion. One of the rules that St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order, adopted was that knowledge of the



native language was a requirement for missionary work (Dunne 13). This represented a shift in previous orders that oftentimes tried to “Europeanize” the culture in which they worked (Dunne 12). Though the Jesuits took on the task of adopting the Chinese language, they soon found that translating key Christian concepts proved to be difficult. Additionally, missionaries were left in a predicament as they dealt with the strong tradition of Confucianism that was engrained in both state and home life. The most controversial of these traditions included ancestor veneration and state-supported ceremonies and shrines to Confucius. The disagreement in how to handle these issues led to dissent among Jesuit missionaries and the Vatican. The debate has been dubbed the Chinese Rites Controversy and it spanned the course of a century. Despite the argument between the Vatican and missionaries in the field, the conclusions made from the Chinese Rites Controversy laid a useful framework of how Catholic missionaries operate in foreign countries to this day.

Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci arrived in China in 1601. Ricci was unique in that he was more concerned with learning about the Chinese culture than changing it. He also had a deep respect for the Chinese as people, going as far as to say, “one can confidently hope that in the mercy of God, many of the ancient Chinese found salvation” (Ricci 93). When he first arrived he traded his Jesuit uniform for Buddhist robes until he found out that the bonzes were looked down upon. That’s when he took on the uniform of the Chinese scholar-gentry class, the *literati* (see fig. 2). This started his lifelong respect and relationship with the *literati*.



Ricci felt that outwardly showing his acceptance to Chinese culture and placing himself among the *literati* elite would help in his evangelizing activities (Minamiki 16). Ricci’s diaries later published by his successor Nicolas Trigault (pictured in Fig. 2) expressed:

The Chinese look upon all foreigners as illiterate and barbarous, and refer to them in just these terms. They even disdain to learn anything from the books of outsiders because they believe that all true science and knowledge belongs to them alone (Ricci 89).

Fig. 2 Peter Paul Rubens

Yet despite this perception of most foreigners, Ricci became a well-respected citizen. He was the first Westerner to be invited to the Forbidden City and was later granted a stipend from Emperor Wan-leih (Douglas 14). Having received the patronage of the Emperor of China, Ricci was afforded the privilege to meet with important Chinese officials (Douglas 14). Ricci believed that there were already structures in place that were conducive to the successful induction of Christian religious values. After studying Taoism and Buddhism, which were common among the lower classes, he found the most promise in the elite gentry class, the *literati* who were also devout scholars of Confucius (Ricci 94). In them, he found the rationality to be able to discern between religious worship and respectful veneration that would be necessary to be both a Christian and follower of Confucius.

However, Ricci's goal of a hybrid Christianity that would be tailored to Asian traditions was a short-lived reality as Dominican and Franciscan missionaries entered China and were appalled by the Jesuits' approach (Minamiki 25). A series of letters and investigations by the Vatican began the Chinese Rites Controversy, which had two main issues at the heart of the debate. The first issue involved ceremonies and rites performed in honor of Confucius that included sacrifice and offerings. The second issue dealt with the tradition of ancestral veneration that involved altars and spirit tablets in honor of deceased relatives.

Confucian thought is centered on the idea of harmony. To strive for harmony in nature, oneself, and in relationships with others is the primary goal in life. Confucius identified five fundamental relationships: sovereign and subject, parents and child, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, friend and friend (Dunne 287). Harmony comes from people

behaving in the appropriate manner in these relationships. The most important of the relationships is the one between parent and child, which is governed by the virtue of *hsiao*—filial piety. Chinese scholar George Dunne believes that the idea of *hsiao* is the basis for all Chinese culture:

Upon that primary virtue, and through the accompanying virtues of obedience, respect, and service, which is implied, the structure of Chinese society had in the main been erected. To it, more than any other factor, were the stability and continuity of that society due. (288).

Filial piety also means that an individual serves their parents even after they have died. As a famous passage from *Chung Yung* describes, “filial piety is seen in the skillful carrying out of the wishes of our forefathers...thus, they served the dead as they would have served them alive” (as quoted by Minamiki 5).

In maintaining this virtue, traditions concerning ancestral rites developed. The spirit or ancestral tablet is an example of filial piety. The tablet bears the name, family status, and social rank of the deceased and on the back of the tablet has the date of birth and death (Minamiki 5). The tablet is placed on an altar and during the morning period, incense and paper money is burned and participants perform various respectful gestures like bowing or kneeling. Afterwards, families may place offerings of food and drink on the altar during anniversaries, holidays, or other special occasions (Minamiki 6). Of all the issues surrounding the Rites Controversy, the energy surrounding the ancestral tablets is truly phenomenal. Time and time again Jesuits defended the practice:

Their intention in erecting such tablets inscribed with the name of their deceased father or grandfather is to set up a certain place or term to which they can direct their minds; and to it as to their picture, show those accustomed honors to them as if they were present. [They intend] nothing more than this (Furtado as quoted by Dunne 294).

The debate surrounding the use of ancestral tablets is one that is markedly similar to the iconoclastic controversies between the Catholic Church and Byzantine Emperor Leo III during the 700s. In 726, Emperor Leo declared that all icons in churches were to be destroyed. Pope Gregory II defended the practice describing the difference between images and idols (Herbermann 620). He believed art can work in harmony with scripture and is a useful tool, especially for the illiterate (Wecker). However, despite the glaring similarity between ancestral tablets and Roman Catholic icons and symbols, the ancestral tablet remained one of the most controversial issues surrounding the controversy.

Rites honoring Confucius ebbed and flowed throughout Chinese history depending on who was in power. Not only is Confucian thought embedded in the very fabric of the culture by dictating relationships, but also it was very visible. According to law, a Confucian temple must be built wherever a government school is established (Minamiki 8). In addition to housing the works of Confucius, ceremonies and sacrifices also took place at these temples. One of the more important functions of these temples was for the ceremony awarding degrees to students who had passed their examinations. It was for these reasons that Ricci was a proponent of the belief that the ceremonies and sacrifices were not religious in nature and merely held civil and social significance (Minamiki 20).

The Jesuits came up with clever ways to incorporate traditional teachings with Christian ideals. Ricci selected the words *Shang-ti* and *Tien-chu* for God (Dunne 283). Unlike Ricci, who chose Chinese words that were close in meaning but not in significance, Jesuits in Japan had run into the problem of choosing a word that was culturally loaded. Jesuits chose the word *Dainichi* for God which was the word associated with a Buddhist deity (Dunne 283). This later proved to be at the heart of the controversy. Ricci also went to great lengths to incorporate Christian

symbols into his teachings. Since there was not a Chinese word for a cross, instead of teaching the Chinese a foreign word, Ricci chose the Chinese character ten that is in the shape of a cross (110). Similarly, the Jesuits also came up with a way to include Christian teachings on a traditional ancestral tablet (see Fig. 3). This tablet combines the traditional shape and material used in Chinese spirit tablets



Fig. 3 Bibliothèque National de Paris

with Christian images of the crucifix and “IHS” monogram representing the Greek abbreviation for Jesus’ name. Translated the tablet reads:

The text within the outline of the cross says: ‘Worship the true Lord, creator of heaven, earth and all things and show filial piety to ancestors and parents.’ The text in the side columns explains the Christian attitude: It is through father and mother that one receives his greatest favors from God. After death, whether they receive punishment or reward, they will not return home. ‘Therefore,’ the instruction concludes, ‘the filial son or grandson sets up a tablet or picture by no means that their spirits might dwell therein, but in order to serve as a reminder of his debt’ (Dunne 293).

This tablet symbolizes perfectly the complete symbiosis that Ricci was trying to achieve in Chinese Christianity. Though incorporating a lot of Chinese symbols, the Jesuits did insist that converts modify some behaviors so that they would be more consistent in Gospel teachings. So in the case of ancestral tablets, they permitted their use as long as they refrained from using only candles, flowers, and incense on the altars, and discontinued the practice of offering food, the burning of paper money (Dunne 292).

During the Chinese Rites Controversy, the central misunderstanding among those in Rome was the belief that the state-supported shrines to Confucius and spirit tablets used for ancestral worship were forms of idolatry, which are prohibited in both the Old and New

Testament (Exodus 20:3-4¹ and 1 John 5:21²), in addition to being denounced in Church teachings. Prior to this moment, missionaries had dealt with cultural issues amongst themselves, so there are not previous discussions surrounding indigenous rites on Vatican-level. However, the Church was very well versed in issues surrounding the line that separates idol-worship from veneration.

There are parallels that can be made between the Chinese Rites Controversy and similar incidents that the Church had to deal with when it was first gaining momentum in Europe. One incident that occurred in Rome when Christians were trying to convert pagans is particularly comparable. According to Roman tradition each Roman state was assigned a state-supported god or goddess. Flamines, or priests, were designated to devote themselves to the service of the god or goddess of the region (Ramsey 540-41). The Council of Elvira in 303 denounced these practices and also prohibited Christians from surrounding or participating themselves in pagan festivals (Grigg 428-33). Similarly, the shrines and ceremonies dedicated to Confucius were state-supported; however, unlike the ones taking place in Rome, the Chinese government considered them “civil ceremonies” and not religious in nature (Dunne 297).

In 303 the Council of Elvira denounced the worship of Roman state gods and goddesses. It further prohibited Christians from being around or participating in pagan festivals (Grigg 428-33). Though the Church denounced idolatry, their own practices of veneration led to conflict between state leaders in the early half of the century. After Byzantine Emperor Leo III banning religious symbols in 730 led to violence, the Church reconvened the Council of Nicaea which

¹ **3** "You shall have no other gods before me. **4** You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. **5** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, **6** but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments" (NIV)

² "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols" (NIV).

had met over 400 years prior. The Second Council of Nicaea clarified proper veneration of icons and mandated that all churches have such icons

(<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Idolatry>).

Church fathers like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas both address the subject. In *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas said this about worship: “now it ought to be paid to the supreme, uncreated God alone; and therefore whenever divine worship is paid to any creature whatsoever, it is a superstitious practice” (Q. XCIV, Secunda Secundae, Pt. 2). He condemned these actions believing that they were a sin (XCIV, Art. II). Similarly, Bishop of Hippo, St. Augustine defined idolatry as the worship of a “human construction or creation” (as quoted by McGrath 12), and warned that worshipping idols made a person susceptible to invasions by demons (<<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Idolatry>>). Despite his quick denunciation of idolatry, St. Augustine provides an interesting parallel to the Jesuit missions in China. Bishop during a time and place where Christians were still participating in pagan traditions, particularly ones involving ancestral and burial rites, Augustine is an example of a Church leader dealing with issues of indigenous rites (Dunne 292). Jesuit missionary Furtado, in making this connection, praised Augustine for his patience in gradually eliminating these cultural practices without much quarrel (Dunne 294).

After Martin Luther condemned the use of religious symbols, icons, and relics used in Catholic traditions, the Church had to further clarify their usage and purpose during the Council of Trent in 1563:

not that any divinity, or virtue, is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or, that trust is to be reposed in images... but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent (The Council of Trent 234).

The Counter-Reformation of the late 16th century led to a renewed vigor in the Roman Catholic Church. The Jesuits, in particular, helped this movement (<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Idolatry>>). With Protestantism beginning their own evangelizing efforts, the Church made missionary work a top priority. This led to the creation of the *sacra congregatio christiano nomini propagando* (known as Propaganda Fide) in 1622, which is in charge of regulating ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries. The Propaganda Fide was also created to control missionary activity worldwide. The inter-order rivalries that existed among the Jesuits, Dominican and Franciscan orders was a concern to the Vatican (Mungello 35). Therefore, the creation of the Propaganda Fide was also a political statement from the Vatican to missionaries bolstering their jurisdiction over the orders.

Before the Propaganda Fide became involved, the controversy surrounding indigenous rites had already come up as Jesuit missionaries in Japan and China had already developed different and conflicting views (Dunne 283). They held several conferences where they reached conclusions on many issues surrounding cultural differences, but never reached a conclusion on how to translate Christian ideas, or how to deal with Confucian ceremonies and ancestral worship (Dunne 285). However, as mentioned before, prior to this time the Vatican had taken a hands-off approach to issues surrounding missionary evangelizing (Minamiki 24). In fact, though the Jesuits were loyal to the Pope, they still had a very independent streak that can be traced back to the unorthodox missionary methods that their founder, Ignatius, espoused³ (Dunne 14). So, when Juan Baptista Morales submitted seventeen problems involving Jesuit missionary

³ An example of this would be when Ignatius, not the Pope, gave the Jesuit priests orders concerning the broad adaptation of Celtic customs when evangelizing Ireland in the sixteenth century (Dunne 14). While Dunne may be overstepping his interpretation of the events, he seems to be of the belief that the Jesuit order was a sort of renegade religious order that “breaking with the dominant spirit of the times and recalling a distant past [“the spirit of Ignatius, communicating itself to some of the early Jesuit missionaries” (Dunne 14)], restored the concept of cultural adaptation to a central position in the world of mission of Christianity” (Dunne 14).

practices to the Propaganda Fide, it was a momentous shift taking a power that had once been held by Jesuits and giving it to the Vatican.

In 1645, Pope Innocent X issued a decree that was based solely on the information provided by Juan Baptista Morales that denounced some Jesuit missionary practices, including those used in China. The theologians of the Holy Office denounced any ceremony or rite involving Confucius, the ability to participate in funeral rites, and the idea that the dead are present in the spirit tablets. The only concession made was allowing converts to prostrate in front of the altar that is created after a person dies; however, only if the altar was not a “true altar” but an ordinary piece of furniture and the actions are “within the bounds of civil and political compliance” (as quoted by Minamiki 27). Pope Innocent X also added that the missionaries were to follow the decree or fear excommunication (Minamiki 28).

The Jesuits countered saying that Morales’ interpretation was inaccurate and the Jesuits requested that the case be sent to Martino Martini of the Propaganda Fide. After reviewing the case he agreed with Ricci that the Confucian ceremonies “were originally instituted for an exclusively civil cult” (as quoted by Minamiki 29). He also concluded that as long as the superstitious elements were taken out of the ancestral rites, then converts could participate. It was issued on March 23, 1659 and signed by Pope Alexander VII (Minamiki 30). That same year the Propaganda Fide issued an important document that dealt with all missions:

Make no endeavor and in no way persuade these people [in the missions] to change their rites, habits or mores as long as these are not very manifestly contrary to religion and good mores...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 (as quoted by Minamiki 31).

This statement suggests that the Vatican hoped that by making such a broad statement, it would cover all rites controversies, and they would no longer have to deal with all issues. It also

appears to be giving the Jesuit missionaries the freedom to make decisions that they think would be best for China. Yet the freedom given by Pope Alexander VII was quickly harnessed under the leadership of Pope Clement XI.

Though another decree wasn't given until 1704, the debate had not stopped among the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans in China. The new Pope, Clement XI, called for a full review of the investigation that had started seven years earlier. Clement XI forbade all native Christians from participating in any rites to Confucius and ancestors because he believed them to be superstitious in nature (Minamiki 44). Neither the Jesuits nor the Emperor were very happy with the Pope's verdict and the Emperor even banished the Vatican representative from his country (Minamiki 54)!

This led Pope Clement XI to write a papal bull *Ex Illa Die* in 1715 (see appendix 1). It reiterated his previous decree in saying that ancestral rites and Confucius ceremonies were not allowed and that God must be addressed by his "proper" name and not the Chinese translation "Deus should be addressed as the Lord of Heaven, Earth and everything in the universe" (Dan 22). This part was probably addressed because Pope Clement XI wanted to streamline all missionaries and there had been so much trouble caused by the Jesuits in Japan. He goes on further to exert his power and authority and threatens excommunication if anyone tries to disobey his order. Finally, to make it official he demands that every missionary, official or not, has to sign an oath (see appendix 2) promising to faithfully obey the directives of the Pope and to not question the Chinese rites anymore (Minamiki 61). If there was misconduct then the Pope would penalize the missionary involved in the behavior. Though the decree of 1715 officially ended the controversy, it was essentially the same decree as the one in 1704, but this decree provided the framework for which it could be enforced.

The Emperor of China Kangxi responded to the decree by kicking out all missionaries in China:

Reading this proclamation, I have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them because they do not understand larger issues as we understand them in China. There is not a single Westerner versed in Chinese works, and their remarks are often incredible and ridiculous. To judge from this proclamation, their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism. I have never seen a document which contains so much nonsense. From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble (as quoted by Dan 22).

In addition to losing favor in the eyes of the Emperor, this decree also caused the missionary effort in China to basically cease. To make matters worse, Pope Benedict XIV took Clement XI's oath a step further and made missionaries swear that they would not even bring the issue up (Minamiki 69). While they continued to remain in the area, as a result of not allowing potential converts to participate in local Confucian traditions, the Church made little progress in the region (Minamiki 181). On December 8, 1939, newly elected Pope Pius XII addressed the Chinese Rites Controversy in the Sacred Congregation on the Propagation of Faith, which declared that the Vatican no longer believed that the Chinese traditions are superstitious. Meaning that Catholics were allowed to attend ceremonies in honor of Confucius and allowed to have images in honor of the deceased. Further, Pope Pius XII did away with the missionary oath (Minamiki 205). This went a long way to start mending the cultural ties that had been unraveled for nearly two centuries, and brought China and Christianity back where Ricci wanted it—in harmony.

The Chinese Rites Controversy may have officially concluded in 1939, yet the central theme of how sensitive missionaries should be towards local cultural practices is still a very relevant issue. In fact, Catholic Bishops in South Africa are facing the same issues of ancestor worship in their missions. They have reported that while they have converted many to

Catholicism, during times of crisis, converts often fall back on their traditional religious beliefs of ancestor worship. The practices have been described as “the intervention of ancestral spirits, the engagement of spirit-mediums, spirit-possession, consulting diviners about lost items and about their future” (<<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=46223>>). Though the Bishop has publicly denounced such behavior that goes against teachings in the gospel, he reports that even some priests are participating in “divine-healings” (<<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=46223>>). This shows how deeply cultural and traditional beliefs are engrained in an individual. It has become the duty of the Bishop of the area to try to decide what contradicts messages found in the Gospels, and what cultural practices can be tolerated. Ricci seemed to be years ahead of his time in understanding the relevance and importance of cultural practices. It has been concluded by the Bishop that practices that contradict Jesus’ teachings should be outlawed, but still allowing parishioners to invoke ancestors asking for their prayers (<<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=46223>>).

Overall, the message delivered in the 1659 Propaganda Fide concerning respect for other cultures is just as relevant today as it was 350 years ago. The South African Bishop appeals illustrate the problems with evangelizing a foreign religion. Further, Pope Pius XII’s decree goes a long way to putting the power to make decisions back in the hands of the missionaries. In fact, it seems that there is now a reversal of missionaries trying to preserve the local culture. Nicaragua is a modern-day example of how priests are trying to protect the Nicaraguan tradition of wagon pilgrimages. The practice incorporates the indigenous tradition (with the use of wagons and cows) and popular Catholic ones like the veneration of saints (Borland 291). Though some of the practices could be considered extreme, like petitioning a saint for help by using

medallions, overall the local priests feel that it is important to preserve the indigenous culture and have been actively working towards this goal (Borland 396). This is an important case-study that looks at the role the missionary plays within the community. Arguably, Jesuits in China at the time of the controversy were actively preserving the cultures (wearing *literati* garb, utilizing ancestral tablets, etc.), while at the same time preaching Christianity. So it seems that in parts of the world that have already been converted to Catholicism, the role then becomes one of maintenance of both Catholic and indigenous traditions—an idea that Ricci would appreciate.

The importance of the Chinese Rites Controversy cannot be understated. Cross-cultural differences remain an issue in this time of globalization, and it becomes a particularly sticky issue in evangelizing efforts. Ricci seemed to be ahead of his time in his respect and desire to understand the Chinese culture. Much can be learned from Ricci's practice of cultural restraint as Pope John Paul II praised in a speech given on the 400th anniversary of Ricci's landing in Beijing: "Father Ricci made this insight the basis of his patient and far-sighted work of enculturation of the faith in China, in the constant search for a common ground of understanding with the intellectuals of that great land" (October 21, 2001 Schiller Institute). Further, the lesson learned in the controversy is that evangelizing movements are hindered when traditional practices are not incorporated in the transitional process. So in conclusion, the Chinese Rites Controversy and the decrees it produced make it an important and worthwhile topic to study. It revolutionized the way the Catholic Church recognized other cultures and at its conclusion, put the Chinese and Vatican on the path leading to a harmonious relationship. A goal, I believe, that would leave Confucius very proud.

Appendix 1

Ex Illa Die (as quoted by Dan 22-24)

Pope Clement XI wishes to make the following facts permanently known to all the people in the world...

- I. The West calls Deus [God] the creator of Heaven, Earth, and everything in the universe. Since the word Deus does not sound right in the Chinese language, the Westerners in China and Chinese converts to Catholicism have used the term "Heavenly Lord" (Tianzhu) for many years. From now on such terms as "Heaven" and "Shangdi" should not be used: Deus should be addressed as the Lord of Heaven, Earth, and everything in the universe. The tablet that bears the Chinese words "Reverence for Heaven" should not be allowed to hang inside a Catholic church and should be immediately taken down if already there.
- II. The spring and autumn worship of Confucius, together with the worship of ancestors, is not allowed among Catholic converts. It is not allowed even though the converts appear in the ritual as bystanders, because to be a bystander in this ritual is as pagan as to participate in it actively.
- III. Chinese officials and successful candidates in the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations, if they have been converted to Roman Catholicism, are not allowed to worship in Confucian temples on the first and fifteenth days of each month. The same prohibition is applicable to all the Chinese Catholics who, as officials, have recently arrived at their posts or who, as students, have recently passed the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations.
- IV. No Chinese Catholics are allowed to worship ancestors in their familial temples.
- V. Whether at home, in the cemetery, or during the time of a funeral, a Chinese Catholic is not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. He is not allowed to do so even if he is in company with non-Christians. Such a ritual is heathen in nature regardless of the circumstances.

Despite the above decisions, I have made it clear that other Chinese customs and traditions that can in no way be interpreted as heathen in nature should be allowed to continue among

Chinese converts. The way the Chinese manage their households or govern their country should by no means be interfered with. As to exactly what customs should or should not be allowed to continue, the papal legate in China will make the necessary decisions. In the absence of the papal legate, the responsibility of making such decisions should rest with the head of the China mission and the Bishop of China. In short, customs and traditions that are not contradictory to Roman Catholicism will be allowed, while those that are clearly contradictory to it will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Appendix 2

Oath for all missionaries as decreed by Clement XI (as quoted by Minamiki 61).

I, (name), a missionary sent to or destined for China or the kingdom of (name) or the province of (name) by the Holy See or my superior in accordance with facilities granted them by the Holy See, will fully and faithfully obey the apostolic precept and mandate on the Chinese rites and ceremonies, which is contained in the constitution issued on this matter by our Holy Father Clement XI (wherein the formal of the present oath is prescribed) and which is perfectly understood by me through a thorough perusal of the same constitution, and I will observe it exactly, absolutely and inviolably, and will carry it out without any evasion. If however (which God prevent) I act in a contrary manner, then as often as this occurs, I acknowledge and declare myself subject to penalties imposed by the aforesaid constitution. Thus, touching the sacred Bible, I promise, vow, and swear. In this way, may God and this holy Bible help me.

(name) by my own hand

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