

by Chinese Christians, he writes (p. 137) of the great suppression of Buddhism of the 840s that it was “a suppression of institutions”, targeted (as were and are many such government purges) at buildings rather than people, and further asserts “A Japanese monk traveled extensively throughout China at this time and made no mention of the suppression in his diary (Reischauer 1955); obviously, it had not affected him”. It is indeed difficult to weigh up either from Reischauer’s translation or from the original whether this observer was accurately informed about the killings of religious adherents both foreign and Chinese that were reported to him, though at least the allegations of imperial cannibalism that he records do seem intrinsically improbable. Nor does the monk waste words in describing his emotions on hearing these terrifying reports. But it is something of a leap of faith to suppose that he was unaffected.

This tendency is at its strongest in discussion of the aforementioned present government, about which he states “Without multiparty elections, which China does not have (it has a one-party system and has, for the last thousand years, chosen its leaders on merit), there is no role for demagogues” (p. 133). On matters of religion we are told “The Chinese government recognises Tibetan Buddhism under a number of Lamas (who are but abbots of monasteries), especially the Panchen Lama, but not the Dalai Lama, because he is claimed to be the theocratic ruler of most of China” (p. 117). In Tibet the present Chinese government will not “allow the socioeconomic structure to revert to serfdom” (p. 118). More broadly, “All of this suppression has to be understood in the context of Chinese history, since virtually all regime changes have been due to revolts by religious movements” (p. 122). In 1989 some students “apparently headed towards the sound of fighting not far off and were wounded or killed by the crossfire” (p. 127). Even so the Canadian prime minister has said that “the Canadian government cannot sign a trade agreement with China until it apologizes for a massacre that never occurred!” (p. 128). In the South China Sea after other nations are said to have developed islands for military purposes “China was obviously concerned about being left behind and being unable then to secure its maritime trade routes” (p. 130). Somehow we have sailed here into what can only be accounted dangerous and uncertain waters. For all his rich experience, many will think carefully before booking their passage with this highly individual captain.

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SONG GANG:

*Giulio Aleni, Koudou richao, and Christian–Confucian Dialogism in Late Ming Fujian.*

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The history of Christianity in China has seen a growing number of scholars re-examine its major figures and episodes as well as exploring new places and perspectives. Seventeenth-century Fujian is now familiar for the mission planted by the Jesuit Giulio Aleni (Ai Rulüe 艾儒略, 1582–1649) in 1625. Furthermore, beginning in the 1630s, Dominicans helped to establish Christianity in north-east Fujian as a local religion that

has persisted until the present, masterfully portrayed in Eugenio Menegon's *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA, 2009). But the contribution of Aleni, the "Scholar from the West", to Christianity in late Ming China is perhaps now regarded as second only to his confrere Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610), thanks to a number of fine studies, not least by Erik Zürcher (1928–2008), doyen of European Sinologists of China's reception of early Buddhism as well as of early modern Christianity, who published a study and translation of *Kouduo richao* 口鐸日鈔 (*Diary of Oral Admonitions*, 1630–40). This compilation by convert Li Jiubiao 李九標 (d. 1647) records conversations Aleni and other Jesuits had with about one hundred Chinese (including non-believers) around Fujian and is a unique document that reveals Jesuit "accommodation in action" in Zürcher's phrase (*Kouduo richao: Li Jiubiao's Diary of Oral Admonitions, A Late Ming Christian Journal* (Sankt Augustin, 2007), p. 7).

*Kouduo richao* lies at the heart of Song Gang's study. Song seeks to understand Aleni's mission and the seventeenth-century exchanges between China and Europe by focusing on "dialogism", which "played a key role in fostering the awareness of a culturally different yet still comprehensible *other* to the Jesuits and late Ming Confucians". This led to a "dialogic hybridization" and a syncretic "Chinese Christianity" that, for Song, are more encompassing concepts for understanding what happened than earlier approaches centred on "cultural encounter", "localization" and "interaction and communication". Chapter 1 explores dialogue as a genre, outlining the European and Chinese traditions from Socratic dialogues and Confucius' *Analects* to their intersection in the late Ming, arguing that it could "represent an ongoing exchange of views" while achieving "a unity of diverse voices". Chapter 2 summarizes Aleni's life from his youth in Brescia to his final 25 years building Christian communities across Fujian (1625–49). Song highlights Aleni's contacts with literati and converts and also his writings, arguing that intellectual and spiritual concerns went hand-in-hand; there was no shift from an intellectual to a pastoral approach as other scholars have suggested. Thirty-six of the 336 conversations in *Kouduo richao* address scientific topics, presented in chapter 3, including astronomy, calendrics, the shape of the earth, winds and earthquakes, and other creations of the Lord of Heaven (i.e. God), putting Chinese ideas in dialogue with Western concepts to produce a "hybrid knowledge". Chapter 4 begins by tackling some of the thorniest questions in Christian theology: the Lord of Heaven's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; predestination and free will; and the justice and necessity of eternal punishment. Adding to Gianni Criveller's *Preaching Christ in Late Ming China: The Jesuits' Presentation of Christ from Matteo Ricci to Giulio Aleni* (Taipei, 1997), Song analyses Aleni's approach to Christological problems. For example he compared the Crucifixion to Shang dynastic founder Cheng Tang 成湯 (17th c. BCE) offering himself as a sacrificial victim. The chapter also discusses the Trinity, Mary as mediatrix and protector, body and soul, and spiritual and moral self-cultivation, which most readily resonated with Confucian ethics. Chapter 5, "Salvation before the eyes", explores the visual dimension. The Jesuits brought paintings and illustrated books, famous examples being Aleni's *Explanation of the Images of the Lord of Heaven's Incarnation* 天主降生出像經解 of 1637, and a similar work that Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666) presented in 1640 to the Chongzhen emperor, who reportedly was captivated and displayed it in the palace (see Nicolas Standaert's *An Illustrated Life of Christ Presented to the Chinese Emperor*, Sankt Augustin, 2007, pp. 44–51). Song explains how Aleni's book helped foster a Christ-centred spirituality among converts. The Chinese also marvelled at maps, scientific instruments, and religious objects. Crosses were inscribed with names of ancestors and venerated, used for contemplating the life of Jesus, and wielded in exorcism – competing with Buddhist and Daoist

priests. Song's inclusion of rituals here seems apt when imagining how sacraments might have appeared, e.g. the hybrid marriage rituals of convert Candida Xu where she bowed only to a picture of Christ, while her non-believing groom bowed to "idols". But the visual dimension seems less apparent in Song's discussion of the "concubine dilemma", which pitted Christian monogamy against Confucian filial piety and held back the most ardent converts in their Christian progress.

Overall, Song's detailed study complements the scholarship of Zürcher and another Monumenta Serica volume, "*Scholar from the West*": Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582–1649) and the *Dialogue between Christianity and China*, edited by Tiziana Lippiello and Roman Malek (Nettetal, 1997). A particular strength is the comparison of Aleni's texts with other missionary writings. This shows how individual Jesuits formulated different versions of *Tianxue*, e.g. Aleni's explanation of love differed slightly from that of Diego de Pantoja (1571–1618). But while Song rightly underscores the dialogic dimension of the Sino-European encounter, his argument seems both overstated and underexplored. As he points out on p. 6, out of 590 Chinese Christian texts composed in the seventeenth century, at least 100 contained dialogue forms (or around 50 of 300 by a different count on pp. 333, 343–9). But what about the other texts? Surely they contributed to the dialogue even if they were not dialogic texts *per se*? And it would have been helpful to compare *Kouduo richao* with later texts by Chinese converts as well. For instance, Li Jiubiao's younger brother, Li Jiugong 季九功 (d. 1681) produced several Chinese-Christian texts, some of which took dialogic forms, years after Aleni had died. Although Song mentions some in passing, a more sustained comparison might have further revealed the importance of dialogism. Similarly, Song's discussion of "paradoxical relations of the *self–other* complex" could have been clearer. How can we more effectively elaborate on realizations that "the dialogic *self–other* relation can be seen as an aspect of the embedded nature of human existence" and "self-understanding is often used to shape one's perception of the *other*" (pp. 24–5, 38) in the historical context? Reflections on intercultural dialogue in Vincent Shen's 沈清松 *From Matteo Ricci to Heidegger: Sino-Western Philosophical Interactions from an Intercultural Perspective* 從利瑪竇到海德格: 跨文化脈絡下的中西哲學互動 (Taipei, 2014), and the emphasis on the interactions themselves – rather than mutual influence – in Nicolas Standaert's *L'«autre» dans la mission: Leçons à partir de la Chine* (Brussels, 2003) could have helped. These suggestions aside, we should thank Song Gang for deepening our understanding of Chinese Christianity and the dialogue between China and Europe.

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CHRISTOPHER AGNEW:

*The Kongs of Qufu: The Descendants of Confucius in Late Imperial China.*

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Christopher Agnew has written an informative book about a complex subject, the contested fate of the Kong family of Qufu during the most recent millennium of