

On Transmission of Chinese Culture to the West During the Late Ming and Early Qing

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Abstract

The Catholic missionaries acted an indispensable role in the cultural communication between China and the West during the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties. Standing in a two-way street, on one hand, they introduced western culture to China, and on the other hand, they introduced Chinese culture to the West.

Key words: Catholic missionaries; Transmission; Chinese culture

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INTRODUCTION

The fascination of the cultural communication between China and the western countries during the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties was that it was a worldwide discussion about Chinese culture and Western culture. In China, the emperors and scholars were thinking about western culture represented by Christianity; in the West, the kings and ideologists were discussing about Chinese culture represented by Confucianism.

As to the function of the Catholic missionaries in the cultural communication between China and the West, US Sinologist John King Fairbank said that these Christian missionaries stood in a two-way street, on one hand, they introduced western culture to China, and on

the other hand, they introduced Chinese culture to the West.

1. TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION OF CHINESE CLASSICS

The worldwide discussion about Chinese culture and Western culture began from the translation and introduction of Chinese classics by the missionaries.

Before Great Navigation Era, the Europeans' knowledge about China was basically from the travel notes of tourists and explorers who came to China by landway. In the famous book *The Travels of Marco Polo*, there were some descriptions about Chinese religion, but there was no introduction of Confucianism, the mainstream of Chinese culture. That was why some people said Marco Polo looked on China only with a Venetian merchant's eyes.

The Europeans' knowledge about China was enlarged since Great Navigation Era. There were a series of reports about China written by Spanish and Portuguese before Jesuits arrived in the East, such as *A Summary Oriental*, written by Thome Pires in Malacca who was the first envoy sent to China by Portugal and Letter from Portugals Captive in Canton written by his colleagues—Cristqvaio Vieiro and Vasco Calvo when they were put in prison in Guangzhou.

S. Franciscus Xaverius, one of the founders of Jesuits, was the first man who reported the Chinese ideologies to the west. Although he had no chance to go to the inland of China, yet he lived in Japan and Chinese coastland for many years. He had contacted with many Chinese people and had some understanding of Chinese culture. That was the difference between him and Marco Polo. He wrote in his letter to Europe:

It is reported by the Portuguese who have lived in China that China is a justiciable state, superior to all the Christian areas. According to what I find in Japan, Chinese are wise and

their talents are much higher than Japanese. Chinese is good at thinking and they pay great attention to learning. (Louis, 1995)

He said in another letter:

Chinese territory is wide. People there abide by laws and the government is great. China is rich and strong. All necessities of living are abundant. Chinese people are clever and good at learning. They think much of humanity, justice and moral. (Ibid.)

The above-mentioned was one of the earliest comments on Chinese culture made by westerners in the 16th century.

When more western missionaries came to China, they were curious about the various Chinese classics. The missionaries realized that if a foreigner did not understand Chinese culture, he could not have a good development in China because this was a national advocating culture.

Spanish Dominican Juan Cobo was the first one to study Chinese classics and translate the classic into the Western language. He missionized among the Chinese living in Philippines at the time. In order to missionize better, he began to study Chinese classics and was attracted by a book named *Mingxin Baojian* (Precious Mirror of the Clear Heart), which was edited in 1393 by Fan Liben, a literator of Ming Dynasty. In the book, Fan Liben collected wisdoms of Confucian scholars and other folk moral adages. His motive to edit the book was to teach children in literacy and for moral education. The book had been welcomed both by officials and populaces in China for its good contents. It was spread widely among the Chinese living in Southeast Asia. Juan Cobo might use the book as his initial Chinese textbook. Probably the philosophy and ethnics thoughts in the book caused his strong interest in Chinese culture, so he decided to translate the book into Spanish.

Michel Ruggieri was the first Jesuit coming to China to translate Chinese classic into Latin. Michel Ruggieri wrote in a letter in 1853: "I sent a Chinese book last year, attached with the Latin translation." Some researchers thought that the book he translated and sent back to Rome was *Sanzi Jing* (Three Character Classic). Because this translated version was not published, it did not produce any influence.

When Michel Ruggieri went back to Europe, he published his partial translation of Chinese classic *Da Xue* (The Great Learning) in the book *Bibliotheca Selecta Qua Agitur de Ratione Stuciorum in Historia, in Disciplines, in Salute Omnium Procurando Roma* published in 1953 in Rome. Although his translation had some misunderstanding of Confucianism, it had great significance, for he was the first European to translate *Mingxin Baojian* (Precious Mirror of the Clear Heart). Nevertheless, *Mingxin Baojian* (Precious Mirror of the Clear Heart) was a popular book and its idealistic value cannot compare with *Da Xue* (The Great Learning).

Another important work to introduce Confucianism written by the Jesuits in China was Alvare de Smedo's *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*. Alvare de Smedo introduced Confucius and Chinese education system in the book. He appraised Confucius highly for his persevering personality in insisting his own ideal. He said:

Confucius is a great man highly respected by all Chinese people". His books and wisdoms are warmly welcomed. Chinese people regard him as a sage and a great teacher and a polymath. Confucius Temples have been built in every city in China in order to remember him. Ceremonies rites will be held termly in Confucius Temples to pay worship to him. (Smedo, 1999)

In Alvare de Smedo's instruction, he said the major contribution of Confucius was he had written *Wu Jing* (Five Classics). Alvare de Smedo did not mention too much about *Si Shu* (Four Books). When he introduced *Si Shu* (Four Books), he just mentioned that some part of *Si Shu* (Four Books) was works of Confucius and some was works of Mencius. He believed that it was emphasized in *Si Shu* (Four Books) that saint government should found on the basis of morals of individual and family. He said: "Every Chinese must read these nine books when they are studying natural and moral philosophy. In degree examinations, contents of these nine books will be selected for students to read and write." (Ibid.)

As to instruction of worldviews of Confucianism, Alvare de Smedo basically followed Matteo Ricci's route. He introduced five morals emphasized by Confucianism: *Ren* (humanism), *Yi* (justice), *Li* (courtesy), *Zhi* (wisdom) and *Xin* (honesty). He also introduced the principles of Confucianism to deal with the relations between father and son, husband and wife, sovereign and subject, and the relations among brothers and friends.

Although Alvare de Smedo had noticed the worldview of Confucianism was set on the basis of heaven, earth and humanity, he seemed to have little interest in the basic standpoint emphasized by Confucianism, i.e. the unity of heaven and humanity and the correspondence between heaven and humanity. He said:

The Chinese take Confucius as the great master. They do not esteem any fetish, but they believe there must be a God to do rewards and punishments, that is divinity. But they do not pray and they do not have priests to serve for divinity. They describe stories about their great master with respects in their books and regard him as a saint. All things that might that might be irreverent to him are banned, just like what our ancestors did to their divinity. Because they do not know the exact meaning of God, so they pay worship to three famous strong things in the world which were called Sancai by them, i.e. heaven, earth and humanity. Only in the royal palace in Beijing and Nanjing there are splendid temples to hold a memorial ceremony for the heaven and the earth. Only the emperor himself has the right to sacrifice. They do not pray for otherworldly soul. What they inquire is the real benefit, fortune and achievement. They take the heaven and the earth as natural parents and at the same time, they esteem their own parents, too. In general, they are

trying their best to manage everything in order and to make harmonious families and society. (Ibid.)

Alvare de Semedo's instructions in the religion belief of Confucianism were essentially true. These instructions had large influence in the Western world. On the social ethics, he believed the major purpose of Confucianism was to enlighten people to evolve from the worship to the ancestors and saint government to ethical practice in the society.

2. THE CHINESE RITES CONTROVERSY AND TRANSMISSION OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY TO THE WEST

The Chinese Rites Controversy had two different results to China and the West. In China, because the Roman Curia refused to follow Matteo Ricci's policy, Emperor Kangxi and his inheritors, Emperor Youngzheng and Emperor Qianlong, all had antipathies to Catholicism. Thus the cultural communication between China and the West, which already had many achievements, was affected directly and greatly. There were still Jesuits in the Qing Palace, but attitude of the government of Western science and culture had changed greatly. Up to the Qianlong Period, the broad view and magnanimous bosom of Emperor Kangxi had been weakened a lot. To Emperor Qianlong, fruits of western science and technology were his exquisite enjoyments. Many new fruits of western science and technology introduced by missionaries were put aside and did not produce any social influence at all.

In the West, the Chinese Rites Controversy brought an unimaginable result—a persistent “Chinese Fashion” formed in Europe and more Chinese thoughts and culture were introduced into the West. During the Chinese Rites Controversy, for vindicating their own missionary routes, each order of Catholicism in China sent missionaries back to Europe to state their viewpoints to the Roman Curia and the European society. Those missionaries wrote articles and published books to introduce China according to their own understanding, in order to seek pity and support. Thus, a great orient country with wide territory, long history and splendid culture appeared before the Europeans gradually. At that time, China became a nation with special charm in Europeans' eyes and to talk about China became the hottest topic. The information on China increased very quickly. This directly provided ideological nourishments to European Didacticism. So we may say that Europeans benefited from the Chinese Rites Controversy.

Nicolas Trigault was one of the earlier missionaries sent back to Europe. Matteo Ricci asked him to take back his book *De christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*. Nicolas Trigault translated the book from Italian into Latin on his journey and renamed it as *China in the Sixteenth*

Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci. This book was published in Europe in 1615 and produced a stirring impact. It was praised as the first book that introduced China systematically and correctly by the Western (Matteo, 1983).

Dominican Domingo Fernandez Navarrete took an opposite position to Jesuits in 1667 when missionaries in China discussed the “Chinese Rites”. He refused to sign on the resolution made by all missionaries and escaped from Macao back to Europe in December 1669. After that, he published a book named *Tractados historicos, poiticos, eticosy, religiosos de la monatqria de China* in Madrid in 1676.

Martin Martini, who was sent back to Europe by Jesuits in China after Nicolas Trigault, introduced Chinese culture in detail in his books, such as *Novas atlas Simensis, Sinicae hiseoriae decas Prina* and *De bello tartarico historia*. In *Sinicae hiseoriae decas Prina*, he introduced more about Confucius and Confucianism, as well as classics of Confucianism *Si Shu* (Four Books) and *Wu Jing* (Five Classics). He said *Da Xue* (The Great Learning) was the basis of all Chinese philosophies and translated the first section of *Da Xue* (The Great Learning) into Latin. This was the second time to publish the translation of *Da Xue* (The Great Learning) in Europe after Michel Ruggieri. Another noteworthy point of *Sinicae historiae decas Prima* was the introduction of Mencius. Martin Martini said that Mencius was a noble philosopher with excellent declamation talents whose position among Chinese scholars was just inferior to Confucius. Martin Martini simply translated the conversion between Mencius and King Hui of Liang into Latin. This was the first time Mencius together with his thoughts was introduced to the West.

The successor of Martin Martini, Belgian Jesuits Philippe Couplet came to China in 1659. He missionized in Jiangxi for three years. During that time, he and Lgnace da Costa and P. Prosper Intercetta worked together in translating the first five chapters of *Da Xue* (The Great Learning) and *Lun Yu* (The Analects of Confucius) into Latin. The translated version was named *Sapientia Sinica*. In the book, two pages of bibliography of Confucianism were included.

In 1671, on his way back to Rome, P. Prosper Intercetta translated *Zhong Yong* (Doctrine of the Mean) and the translated version was named *Sinarum Scientia Politic Moralis*. Beside the translation of *Zhong Yong* (Doctrine of the Mean), *Biography of Confucius*, which was the first monograph in the West to study Confucius, and eight pages of bibliography of Confucianism were included in the book.

On the basis of *Sapientia Sinica* and *Biography of Confucius*, *Chinese Philosopher Confucius* was written and published. Aloys Pfister introduced *Chinese Philosopher Confucius* as the magnum opus of Philippe Couplet in his book *Notices Biographiques et Bibliographiques sur les Jesuites de l'Ancienne*

Mission de China 1552-1773. But as a matter of fact, it was a collective fruit of the Jesuits in China. During the period of “Calendar Lawsuit”, most Jesuits in China except Johann Adam Schall von Bell were expelled to Guangzhou. So they completed the book collectively. Seventeen missionaries had participated in the work, but when the book was published in Paris in 1687, only four missionaries’ names were signed. They were P. Prosper Intercetta, Herdtricht P. Christian, Francois de Rougemont and Philippe Couplet.

Philippe Couplet’s contribution to the book was greatest. He brought the draft of book back to Europe and had it published. In addition, he wrote a long preface for the book to summarize the contents. He said in the preface that the book was not written for the common European readers but for the missionaries who would come to China, in order to let them know more about Chinese culture. Philippe Couplet followed Matteo Ricci’s policy and criticized New Confucianism. He thought that the New Confucianism like Zhu Xi had deviated from Confucius’ tradition at all. Confucius paid worship to the heaven but the New Confucius paid worship to ‘taiji’ and ‘li’, which was regarded as the prime and essential matter by the New Confucius.

People who are familiar with Chinese philosophy will know that New Confucianism is a new system based on the ancient Confucianism, combining with Buddhism and Taoism. New Confucians developed the original ethical character of Confucianism into an abstractive and noumenal trend. In Zhu Xi’s view, ‘taiji’ and ‘li’ were not material things, but something similar to the “Idea” of Plato and the “absolute idea” of Hegel, yet the missionaries regarded them as something similar to the theory of Democritus. They judged Confucianism as a natural logos and New Confucianism as a theory of materialism. The view affected European thinkers directly during the period of 17th-18th century.

P. Prosper Intercetta’s *Biography of Confucius* and his translation of *Da Xue* (The Great Learning), *Zhong Yong* (Doctrine of the Mean) and *Lun Yu* (The Analects of Confucius) were also included in the book. According to US researcher David Mungello, missionaries’ translation of *Da Xue* (The Great Learning), *Zhong Yong* (Doctrine of the Mean) and *Lun Yu* (The Analects of Confucius) was not faithful to the source text, but restated from the view of Christianity.

David Mungello appraised Chinese Philosopher Confucius as the tiptop achievement of the Jesuits’ accommodating in China. Lundbek Knud, a Danmark researcher said:

Confucius was introduced to Europe for the first time then. In this book, Confucius was described as a comprehensive moralist, and it announced that Confucius’s ethnics and natural theology governed the great empire of China. This supported the hope of Jesuits to convert the Chinese to Catholicism in a short time. (Lundbek, 1983)

Chinese Philosopher Confucius had brought vast impacts in Europe. Because Philippe Couplet wrote the words “Consecrating to French King Louis XIV” on the head page of the book, the book obtained support from Louis XIV. In 1688, it was translated into French and in 1691 was translated into English.

Athanasius Kircher introduced thought of Confucius in his book *China Illustrata*. He said:

Confucianism is the most venerable and indigenous theory in China. The Confucians have written many books and they receive more glorification than other schools. They acknowledge Confucius as the founder of the school and the first philosopher in China. Confucians do not idolize. They just pay homage to a divinity which was called “tian”, i.e. heaven.

The book named *An Account of the Empire of China, Historical Political, Moral and Religious* written by Nicolas Longobardi was an important magnum opus of Jesuits in China to introduce Chinese philosophy and religion to the West. Nicolas Longobardi believed that it was incorrect that Matteo Ricci and other missionaries equaled Chinese “shangdi” to Western God. He thought Chinese philosophy was naturalistic and not in accordance with Catholicism, especially what New Confucians said as “li” and “taiji” was really a prime of hylic world and its own nature was not deiform but hylic. If we say what Matteo Ricci emphasized was the coherence between Confucianism and Catholicism, what Nicolas Longobardi emphasized was the materialistic character of New Confucianism, in order to narrate “Chinese Rites” were not in accordance with Christianity. At that time, the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz paid great attention to Nicolas Longobardi’s instruction of New Confucianism. Leibniz and his student C. Wolff began to study the relations between New Confucianism and western philosophy specially and deeply.

Among the introductions of Chinese religion and philosophy at that time, *Nouveaux Memoire sur Letat Present de La Chine* written by French Jesuit Louis le Comte caused the greatest dispute. This book published in Paris in 1696 was involved deeply in the Chinese Rites Controversy. The Sorbonne held more than twenty meetings in two months to examine the book. There were one hundred and sixty theologians who had expressed their opinions. Later one hundred and fourteen theologians voted for publishing the book and forty-six opposed. Thus the book became the magnum opus of Jesuits to defend Catholicism.

In his book, Louis le Comte used six pages to introduce the Confucians living in the Song Dynasty. He introduced three persons to Europe, including Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong and Zhu Xi. Louis le Comte did not adopt the concept of New Confucians; he called them as philosophy school. When introducing their philosophy, Louis le Comte said:

Philosophers in the Song Dynasty believed there was nothing beyond the nature and “li” was the basic principle in nature. The Chinese compared the universe to a tremendous building and “li” was on the tiptop of this building to link and maintain the construction. (Comte, 1696, Vol.1)

Louis le Comte introduced Zhu Xi’s *TaijiJieyi* (Explanation of Taiji) specially. *TaijiJieyi* was one of Zhu Xi’s important works in which he settled the noumenal position of “taiji”. Louis le Comte reckoned that Zhu Xi emphasized too much on the noumenon of “taiji” and put it in the position of first principle. It was remarkable that not like Nicolas Longobardi who just criticized New Confucianism blindly Louis le Comte had tried his best to describe the matter.

3. REPORTS ON CHINESE HISTORY

After Great Navigation era, some missionaries coming to China returned to Europe and published books about China, such as *Reports on China* by Pereira and *Records of China* by Gaspar de Cruz. Among these books, the most important was *Diplomatic Mission to Fujian* and *Notes of Ming Dynasty* written by Spanish Augustinian Martin de Rada.

Before Martin de Rada’s books, the westerner’s reports on China mainly said on the level of individual travel notes. Martin de Rada’s books got a breakthrough. Just like what he said in the preface, “what we are talking about China here is composed of two kinds of materials. Some of them are what we saw and heard ourselves when we were in China and some of them are from Chinese books and treatise (Boxer, 1999). Martin de Rada asked a Filipino of Chinese origin Sang Leys to translate Chinese books into Spanish for his reading. Without these Chinese historical literatures, it was impossible for Martin de Rada, who stayed in China only for three months, to master so many materials.

After Martin de Rada, the most famous book about Chinese history was *Historia de Lascosmas Notables, Ritocostumbres del Gran Regno de La China* written by Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza, a Spanish Augustinian. Though he had never been to China, Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza read many reports of missionaries coming to China and all kinds of travel notes published in the West, so his book became a summarization of all reports on China in the West in the 16th century. In the meantime, this book was the first one in the West to introduce Chinese history systematically. It was totally different from travel notes in narrative mode.

This book obtained great achievements in the West. It had been translated into seven languages in less than ten years and forty-six editions were published. Britain researcher G. F. Hudson said:

Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza’s book had touched the essential of the living in ancient China. It indicated a beginning of a new era. From then on, an applicable compendium on China and its system could be used by the Europeans. (Hudson, 1995)

Along with more books written by Jesuits coming to China were published in the West, the Europeans began to know Chinese history more and more. Among the books, the ones with great influence were Alvare de Semedo’s *Imperio de la China*, Gabriel de Magalhaens’ *New Records of China* and Martin Martin’s *Sinicae hiseoriae decas Prina*.

Alvare de Semedo completed his book *Imperio de la China* in 1638 on his way back to Europe. It was the book written by Jesuit to introduce Chinese history specially. Compared with other books of the missionaries before, his book introduced more details on Chinese social history. Matteo Ricci only used a few words to introduce Chinese provinces in his book *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*, but Alvare de Semedo used two chapters to introduce provinces in Southern China and Northern China separately. Nobody had written in this way before him. Another character of the book was that it disclosed many important events of the Ming Dynasty to the westerners. In the section *Chinese Army and Their Weapons*, he described the event that Ming government purchased western artillery from Macao and accident happened during an exercise in Beijing in 1621. In addition, he reported for the first time on the Nanjing Missionary Case in detail. Thus westerners began to know more about the development of Christianity in China.

Gabriel de Magalhaens’ *New Records of China* was written in Portuguese when he stayed in China. The original name of the book was *Doze Excellencias da China*. In 1682, he asked Philippe Couplet to bring it to Europe. It was translated into French by Abbe’s Claude Benou and published in 1688. Because Gabriel de Magalhaens lived in Beijing for a long time and often had chances to get in the Imperial Palace, he could describe Beijing and some circumstances in the Qing Palace in detail. These circumstances were disclosed to the West for the first time and the westerners paid great interest. The chronology of China attached in the book had great influence, too. Although Philippe Couplet had attached a chronology of China in his book Chinese philosophy Confucius, but in Gabriel de Magalhaens’ chronology, the conflict between Chinese chronicle and what recorded in *Bible* was displayed obviously. This conflict attached attention of many European ideologists.

Martin Martini’s *Sinicae Historic Decus Prima* was the only book written by missionaries on ancient history of China. The so-called ancient history by Martin Martini was referred to the Chinese history before the birth of Jesus, i.e. the period from a Chinese old fable that the world was created by a hero named Pan Gu to the second year of Yuanshou Period in Western Han Dynasty. This book struck the history view of Christianity greatly, which verified to the westerners that besides the civilization of Christianity, there was Chinese civilization with longer history.

De Bello Tartarico Histotia, Antverpiae was another book written by Martin Martini. He described the history of how Ming Dynasty was conquered by Qing Dynasty according to his own experience in China during that period. It exposed the modern history of China at that time to the westerners, and was considered to be the first book in the West on modern history of China (Du, 1985).

Histoire gen Crale de China written by Moyriac de Mailla was published in France in 1778. The book was composed of twelve volumes, including the history from the Pre-Qin Period to Qianlong Period of Qing Dynasty. Major materials of the book were drawn from Zhu Xi's *Tongjian Gangmu* (Outline and Explanation of Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government) and Xu Tongjian *Gangmu* (Continuation of the Outline and Explanation of Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government) written by Shang Luo. Moyriac de Mailla had to write the history of Ming and Qing Dynasties by himself, for there was no book for reference at the time. He only wrote to the Kangxi period and another missionary added the history of Yongzheng and Qianlong Periods (Xu, 1999). The book was tiptop achievements obtained by Jesuits coming to China in introducing Chinese history.

4. DISCUSSION ON CHINESE LANGUAGE IN EUROPE

The earlier Missionaries coming to China had introduced Chinese language in their travel notes. For example, Gaspar de Cruz said: "Chinese use characters to write everything and they do not have fixed letters. They use characters to make up words and they have tremendous characters to denote everything." (Boxer, 1999) Martin de Rada also said:

Chinese characters are the most original and difficult characters to learn, for they are not letters. Different characters denote different things. So even if you know ten thousand characters, you still cannot read all books. Who knows the most characters is the brightest person in China. (Ibid.)

Arty Vocabulario de la lengua China edited by Martin de Rada in both South Fujian Dialect and Spanish was considered to be the first Sino-Western language dictionary. But this dictionary, together with *Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary* edited by Michel Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci and *Vocabularium Ordine alphabetico europapeo more Concinnatum, etc peraccensus suos digestum* edited by Matteo Ricci and Lazare Cattaneo were all not published, so they created no influence in Europe.

Later Chinese language was introduced in Alvare de Semedo's *Imperio de la China*, Gabriel de Magalhaens' *New Records of China* and Martin Martini's *Sinicae Historiak Decus Prima*. But real important influence in Europe was brought by Athanasius Kircher. In his book *China Illustrata* published in 1667, he copied down

the epigraph of *Daqin Jingjiao Linxing Zhongguo Bei* (Memorial of the Propagation in China of the luminous Religion from Daqin—Daqin being the Chinese term for the Roman Empire), phoneticizing each Chinese character and explaining their meanings in Latin one by one. Thus, the westerners could acknowledge Chinese characters from shape, tone and meaning. Certainly, some of his phonetic notations and explanations were incorrect.

Two years later, *An historical Essay Endeavouring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language* written by Webb John was published in Britain and achieved great success. German researcher Andreas Miille also edited a book named *Clavissiruca*. For he was a famous Orientalist and he stated that he had controlled the key of learning Chinese entirely, his book attracted many attentions of the Europeans. Another German researcher, Bayer Gottlieb Siegfried had great interest in Chinese and he edited a book named *Museum Sinicum*.

The European intelligentsia's interest in Chinese language was connected tightly with the development of European culture at the time. After Great Navigation era, Europeans walked out of Mediterranean Sea and sailed through the Atlantic. Being faced by all kinds of languages, they had to take two things into consideration. One was how to deal with the relation between European languages and languages of other races, i.e. why there were so many languages in the world. Second one was how to communicate with other races and if a common language could be found for all human beings. It seemed to be a discussion about Chinese language, but as a matter of fact, it was a matter that the Europeans intended to re-comprehend and re-construct their own culture before so many languages.

According to *Bible*, human beings used the same language at first. But after the Babylon Tower was built, Yahveh let people walk around the world and all kinds of languages were created since then. What was the uniform language used at first? The Europeans had many suspects, such as Latin or Dutch. At that time, there was a severe trade conflict between Britain and Holland, in which Dutchmen were in the favorable position. When Webb John suggested that Chinese language might be the earliest language used in the world, it might verify that the language Adam used in Eden was not Dutch. You can imagine how glad the British would be when they heard the conclusion. That was why Webb John presented the book to Britain King Charles I.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz paid great attention to the communication among various languages. When he heard that Andreas Miille had controlled the key of reading Chinese characters, Leibniz asked fourteen questions eagerly. The focus of his questions was whether Chinese characters had universality of human languages. Leibniz

intended to use Chinese characters as a worldwide language. He judged that: “Essence of Chinese writing means that this language should be used as a world language.” (Etiemble, 1994)

5. THE JESUITS AND THEIR INTRODUCTION OF CHINESE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Since the 16th century, missionaries in the East had paid great attention to Chinese science and technology. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza had never been to China, but he used many words to introduce Chinese science and technology in his book *Historia de Lascosas Mas Notables, Ritoy Costumbres del Gran Regno de La China*. He introduced Chinese artillery manufacturing technology and he pointed out that artillery was used in China earlier than in Europe. He also introduced Chinese typography and pointed out the invention of typography in China was long before John Cutembergo in German. He also praised Chinese shipbuilding technologies. He said:

Lacquer which Chinese use to repair ships is abundant in China. It is very solid and can prevent moth. So their ships are twice as strong as our ships. Pumps used in their ships are much better than ours, being composed of many pieces. With a smaller piece set on the inner part of the ship, they can pump out water easily. (Etiemble, 1994)

Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza’s introduction of Chinese science and technology mainly used indirect materials provided by others. After the Jesuits came to China, such introduction became more and more detailed.

When Matteo Ricci talked about Chinese typography, his depiction was much more detailed than Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza’s. Matteo Ricci said:

Typography in China was invented five hundred years ago and it had a longer history than ours. But its measure is somewhat different from ours. Because numbers of Chinese characters are too large, so western method cannot be used, yet they have begun to adopt a method of scramble. The most popular method is to select a flat board without nodes, afterward to paste reverse side of the paper with characters or pictures they intended to print to the board and move the paper away carefully after a while, then only handwritings were left on the board. They chisel on the board to protrude the trace of characters or pictures. With these boards you can print as many as you need. It is easy to use this method to print Chinese characters, for Chinese characters are larger than our letters. As to speed, I think the necessary time to set up a type of one page that a western typographer uses almost equals to the time a Chinese typographer uses in chiseling one board, even the time a Chinese typographer takes is shorter. So the charge of printing Chinese books is lower than printing western languages books. And there is another merit in Chinese method, i.e. because the board is intact, so you can use it at any time. And you can amend whenever you need. It is easy to change one character and not too difficult to change several lines, what you need do is to rejoin the board. (Pasquale, 1986)

In Alvare de Semedo’s *Imperio de la China* and Martin Martini’s *Sinicae hieoriae decas Prina*, Chinese science and technology were also introduced. In Athanasius Kircher’s *China Illustrata*, he used many words to introduce animals and plants, geographic environment, arts and crafts in China. All these information had attracted great interest of Europeans. *Flora Sinensis* written by Michel Boym was the first book to introduce Chinese plants to the West systematically. He enumerated twenty kinds of Chinese plants and numbers of rare animals with illustrations. Michel Boym also translated a Chinese medicine book *Zhongguo Maijue* (Principles of the Pulse), written by a famous doctor in Ming Dynasty Zhang Shixian. It was deemed the beginning of Chinese medicinal books to be translated into western language (Pan, 1993).

During the procedure of introducing Chinese science and technology to the West, there was an important event that some French Jesuits came to china in 1687. In the time of Matteo Ricci and a long period after that, most missionaries were from Italy, Spain and Portugal. French missionaries were comparatively fewer and the circumstance remained until 1685 when more French missionaries came to China. Many of these French Jesuits had been scientists before they came to China, like Jean de Fontaney, Joachim Bouvet, Claude de Visdelou and Jean Francois Gerbillon who had been appointed as communication academician by French Royal Academy of Sciences in 1684. Besides missionizing, they had another task to investigate Chinese science and technology for French Royal Academy of Sciences.

Jean de Fontaney once wrote a letter to French Royal Academy of Sciences to report how they divided their works—Jean de Fontaney was in charge of Chinese astronomy and geography; Claude de Visdelou was in charge of general history of China, origin of Chinese characters and Chinese language; Joachim Bouvet was in charge of Chinese medicine and animals and plants; Louis le Comte was in charge of Chinese arts and crafts; Jean Francois Gerbillon was in charge of Chinese mineral. Just because of this well organized and planned investigation and study, a peak time of introducing Chinese science and technology to the West came.

Later, French Jesuit Antoino Gaubil contributed himself in introducing Chinese culture to the West. Besides the historical works such as *Histoire de Gentchiscan et des Monqou* and *Histoire de la Grands Dynastie des Thang*, his astronomical research also reached a high level. In his book named *Histoire abregee de l’Astronomid Chinoise*, he introduced the eclipse recorded in the Chinese classics *Shang Shu* (The Classic of History), *Shi Jing* (The Classic of Poetry) and *Chun Qiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals). In another book *Traite de l’Aseronomie Chinoise*, he introduced Chinese astronomical development before the 15th century, such as the table of eclipse, the methods of measuring eclipse, as well as the methods of measuring

planets movement of Hesper, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars and Saturn. Joseph Needham said once "Even today, Antoino Gaubil's books were the necessary reference books for those who intended to study Chinese astronomy." (Joseph, 1975)

These manuscripts of Antoino Gaubil were published formally in Europe later and had great influence on European astronomers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Even the great ideologist Voltaire noted Antoino Gaubil. He said in his book *Essai sur les Moeurs*:

Chinese history is indubitable in general, for it was the only one based on astronomical observations. According to irrefutable chronology, Chinese had recorded the eclipse in 2155 BC. Antoino Gaubil checked thirty-six records of eclipse in the works of Confucius, he only found two incorrect and two dubious. (Voltaire, 1997)

French Jesuit Pierre Martial wrote a series of books, such as *Notices sur les Versaioie Sauvages et Surlamanierede les Elever*, *Notices de Quelques Plantes, Arbisseaux etc. de la China* and *Memoiresur la Petite Verole*. It was a surprise that he even translated the book *Xiyuan Lu* (Records for Washing Away of Wrong Cases) by Chinese legal medical expert Song Ci (1186-1249) into French. From this we can see the wideness of his instruction of Chinese science and technology. In addition, Pierre Martial translated *Kangxi Jixia Gewu Lun* written by Emperor Kangxi about his study of science at spare time, including astronomy physics, biology, medicine, agronomy and geography, etc.

Besides this, Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, Pierre d'Incarville and Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles had translated Chinese science and technology books separately.

Chinese science and technology had attracted European scientists' attention and they began to take the theory and historical records of Chinese science and technology into their science research (Han, 1999). Many achievements of Chinese science and technology had enlightened the modern European scientists. Dr. Joseph Needham said Chinese astronomy theory had directly caused the disaggregation of European astronomy theory in the Middle Ages. He also said that as to ancient science and technology, the world benefited from East Asia, especially from China.

6. RISE OF MISSIONARY SINOLOGY

In the Chinese Rites Controversy, most of the missionaries sent back to Europe had lived in China for years or tens of years. When going back to Europe, they wrote books on one hand, and on the other hand, they made friends with those famous persons. They had contacted with many European important ideologists at the time, like *Gottfrido Guilelmo Leibniz* and *Charles de Secondat, Baton de Montesquieu*. These works and activities of

the missionaries had promoted the knowledge of China in Europe at the time, thus a new learning form was created—Missionary Sinology.

These books about China written by missionaries had caused great interest of the Europeans in China. Three publications about China appeared one after another in Europe, to collect and publish the communications and works of the Jesuits in China. The first one was *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, thirty-four volumes, published from 1702 to 1776. The second one was *Description Geographique, Historique, Chronologique, Politique de L'empire de La Chine et de Tartavie chinoise*, four volumes in total, published in Paris in 1735. It was well edited by Jean Baptiste Du Halde, including abundance of communications, works and research reports of the Jesuits in China. The third one was published during the period from 1776 to 1841, named *Memoires Concernant l'Histoire, Les Scinces, Les Arts, Les Mocaus, Les usages, ec. des Chinors; Pacr Les Missionndires de Pekin*, sixteen volumes in total. It was the successors of *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*. Because in 1773, Pontifex Clement XIV ordered to dismiss Jesuits, so *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses* was unable to be published any longer and the Jesuits in French made a substitute.

The above-mentioned three publications presented the highest level of the knowledge about China in Europe in the 18th century. They had played important roles in introducing Chinese culture to the West. French researcher Isabelle et Jean Louis Vissiere said:

These books appeared just like some true, external and almost innocent chronicles and the people had gotten the feelings of reading what they liked. They enabled us to look into the initial victory in deaneries, the comedic or tragically procedures. They expressed clearly the missionaries' ambitions on religion, diplomacy and sciences in the deaneries. (Vissiere, 2002)

Japanese researcher Gotou Suelo called them as three masterpieces about China in Europe in the 18th century.

During the process of introducing Chinese religion and philosophy to the West, Europeans quickened their steps to understand China and Missionary Sinology had formed its initial status.

CONCLUSION

In general, Chinese culture spread more widely in Europe by the Catholic missionaries and had a comprehensive influence in European ideology and culture during the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties, especially after the Chinese Rites Controversy.

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