The Many Faces of Our Lady:
The Chinese Encounters with the Virgin Mary between 7th and 17th Centuries[1]

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Abstract:

This article explores the emergence and early development of Marian devotions in China from the 7th century to the 17th century. With in-depth analysis of a variety of textual and visual sources, it examines how the Nestorian missionaries and the Franciscan missionaries made the earliest known attempts to introduce Mary to China, how the Jesuit missionaries presented and reproduced Marian images to advocate her as the model of womanly virtues tied with Confucian moral norms, and how the Chinese people in their encounters with this prominent Christian icon developed multilayered responses and (re)interpretations. The interweaving of faith, virtue, and power underpinned the complex formation of a composite image of Mary, whose many faces constituted a marginal but persistent Marian culture in China through the late imperial period and on into the modern era.

Keywords:

The Virgin Mary, Marian devotions in late imperial China, Chinese Marian iconography, Christian-Confucian syncretism, Sinocentrism

Contents

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I. Introduction: Mary and the Story of a Missionary's Curse

In her book, Henrietta Harrison collects an intriguing folktale among Chinese Catholics in Dongergou 洞兒溝, or Cave Gully, a small village to the southwest of Taiyuan, the capital city of Shaanxi Province. Since the story is very short, it is quoted in whole below:

> There was once a French priest called Fa who brought a beautiful statue of Our Lady of Lourdes to the village. Some years later he was transferred to another parish and wanted to take the statue with him. He got a wooden box ready to pack it in, but the Christians prevented him: they blocked the church door with stones and refused to let him in. The priest became very angry. He called the villagers Judeans, and as he left he took off his shoe, shook off the dust, and prayed to Heaven to punish them with seven years of bad harvests. The next year, as the fields were ripening, black clouds came from behind the mountain and hail fell, destroying the standing crops. But the Christians did not believe, so the following year it happened again, and then the next year again, until the villagers were so poor that they had to go to nearby Christians and beg for food. Then they remembered the priest's words so they built a chapel to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows on the mountain. After that there was no more hail.[2]

The story of the missionary's curse, Harrison explains, is just one among many tales with a similar plot circulated in the neighborhood. Embellished with biblical references, including the calling of the villagers as Judeans, taking off the shoe to shake off the dust, and the curse of seven years of bad harvests, this miracle story presents a vivid account of Marian piety among the local Catholics. Their collective memory of a critical moment in the past may be interpreted in different ways. Harrison explains in light of its historical context, namely, "the tension between the power of the missionaries and the poverty and dependence of the villagers" in the early 20th century, a period of surging Chinese nationalism that culminated in the Republican Revolution of 1911.[3] In terms of textual analysis, however, the story indicates a special mode of narration: Compared to most biblical narratives that center on Jesus Christ, Mary takes a dominant role in this miracle story. The plot sounds somewhat awkward, if not paradoxical. The villagers were first "punished" for an attempt to use force to keep the statue of Mary-Our Lady of Lourdes in the village, but they were later "absolved" after they built a chapel to Mary-Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. No one seemed to care about the obvious inconsistency of the narration. Rather, the key interest lay in the villagers' expression of a strong will to remain the spiritual and emotional bonds with Mary, who, as the Mother of God, would show her mercy to believers and protect them from severe disasters.

This intriguing miracle story, I would argue, goes beyond a missionary's curse. The shift of focus from a curse to Mary's mercy and protection reveals a complex mixture of religious

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[2] Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 116.
[3] Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 117-144.

piety, emotional attachment, and collective memory. On the one hand, devotions to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and Our Lady of Lourdes had different origins in Europe. The former emerged as a popular Marian devotion in the late medieval period, while the latter directly resulted from the spectacular apparitions of Mary that took place in the mid-19th century at Lourdes, France.[5] Catholic missionaries would naturally hope to spread these popular Marian devotions in late imperial China. As regard to the case of Cave Gully, a Catholic village since the mid-18th century, the statue brought by the "priest called Fa" must have been be one of many Lourdes-style Marian images that French Catholic missionaries introduced to Chinese Christian communities in the Qing period.[6]

On the other hand, while the Catholics in Cave Gully were spiritually and emotionally attached to Mary, they did not bother to distinguish between Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and Our Lady of Lourdes by their national origins. Nor did they show any interest in learning more about the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854) declared by Pope Pius IX (1792-1878) as a doctrinal stimulus for the rise of Our Lady of Lourdes. What they cared the most was the "beautiful" look of Our Lady of Lourdes, which in a Chinese context may often be equated to one's inner purity, as well as the great power of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows to protect and relieve her people. The French priest turned out to be an ill-tempered foreigner. Understandably, between passion to Mary and submission to the priest, the villagers simply considered the former a priori, even at the expense of a conflict with the latter.

One shall pay attention to another key aspect: The story with its dissonant themes (i.e., a missionary's curse vs. Mary's mercy) has been retold and shared by the villagers' descendants as the collective memory of a long-standing Christian heritage. There must be religious, social, and cultural factors that facilitated the formation and circulation of this miracle story. However, the essential message in between the lines was obvious. Mary, commonly called Shengmu 聖母 (the Holy Mother) in Chinese, has been considered far beyond the symbolic icon of a foreign religion in China. As will be discussed in the following parts, Chinese encounters with Mary started as early as the 7th century. During the late Ming and early Qing period, Chinese Marian culture gradually took shape and thrived through the later generations. The Cave Gully story was just one example among many to testify the persistence of Chinese devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.

The historical journeys of Mary from Europe to other parts of the world have attracted increased attention in the past decades. The subject area opens up a larger domain for scholars to examine Marian devotions as a special case for cross-cultural studies. However, despite the fact that Mary had been introduced to China from early on and a variety of Marian texts and images were produced and circulated since the 17th century, the history of Chinese Marian

[5] Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1976), 210-218, 249-251.
[6] Jeremy Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2013), 80-81.

culture remained underexplored in recent research. By way of a comprehensive survey of the emergence and evolvement of Chinese Marian devotions from the 7th century to the 17th century, this study aims to better understand the critical moments in the process of transcultural exchanges. It examines how Nestorian and Franciscan missionaries made the earliest known attempts to introduce Mary to China, how Catholic missionaries (especially the Jesuits) made strategic efforts to present and reproduce Marian images and promote her as the new model of womanhood tied with Confucian moral norms, and how the Chinese people in their encounters with this prominent Christian icon developed multilayered responses and (re)interpretations. I will highlight the dynamic interplay of three key factors—virtue, power, and faith—that constituted the remodeling of Mary in the Chinese context. The significant growth of Chinese Marian devotions contributed to the indigenization of Christianity in China, thereby transforming the foreign religion into a marginal Chinese religion through the late imperial period and on into the modern era.

II. Vestiges of Mary in Nestorian and Franciscan Representations

The Christian belief was introduced to China in the 7th century, yet Mary has remained obscure in the Chinese mind before the 17th century. Nestorian Christianity, now known as the Church of the East, thrived twice during the Tang and the Yuan periods. Moreover, in the Mongol-Yuan dynasty European travelers, merchants, and missionaries brought Christianity North China and the commercial centers along China's east coast, including Yangzhou and Quanzhou. Out of this long period of a millennium, only some fragmented texts on Mary and scattered artifacts of her image have been found. The rarity of Marian vestiges in China over these centuries was in sharp contrast with the booming Marian cult in medieval Europe.[7]

The earliest known reference to Mary can be seen in the manuscript *Xu ting Mishisuo jing* 序聽迷詩所經 (Sutra of the Messiah), discovered together with seven other Nestorian documents in the Dunhuang Mogao Grottos. It describes that,

> The Celestial Worthy, therefore, made the Cool Wind (i.e., Holy Spirit) to enter a virgin named Moyan 末艷 (i.e., Mary) Hereupon, the Cool Wind entered the body of Moyan in accordance with the instruction of the Celestial Worthy. Suddenly Moyan became pregnant. This was done by the Celestial Worthy because He knew that the virgin had no man-husband yet, and because He wanted also to show the whole world that without a man-husband a virgin can be made pregnant. And thus He made the whole world to see and say that the Celestial Worthy had dignity and power. And thus He made all people to

[7] For studies on Marian devotions in medieval Europe, see Hilda Graef, *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (London: Burns & Oates, 1963), 38-62; also Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2009), 127-276; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 125-136; Brian K. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven: Marian Doctrine and Devotion, Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods* (New York: New City Press, 2012), 185-245.

have a believing heart with purity and caused them to return to the good cause. After her conception, Moyan gave birth to a son named Yishu 移鼠 (i.e., Jesus).[8]

Like the other Nestorian documents, this Sutra of the Messiah adopts some Buddhist terms to explain the fundamental Christian doctrines. The names of Mary and Jesus are transliterated into two unusual Chinese spellings of Moyan and Yishu. They reveal the author's intention to stress the special religious identity of the Nestorian Church in contrast with Buddhism and other indigenous or foreign religions in China. Nonetheless, the concept of Mary's virginal conception of Jesus is clearly stated in line with the doctrine on the dignity and power of the Celestial Worthy, i.e., God. The same concept is also seen on the inscription of the Nestorian Stele *Daqin Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei* 大秦景教流行中國碑, "Hereupon our Tri-une (Eloah) divided His Godhead, and the Illustrious and Adorable Messiah, vailing His true Majesty, appeared in the world as a man. Angels proclaimed the joyful moment when a virgin gave birth to the Holy One in *Daqin*. A bright star announced the felicitous event. Persians saw its splendour and came with tribute."[9]

In these early texts, the Nestorian view on Mary may be at stake. She is simply referred to as a virgin, with no further information about her family or explanation on her role in the Christian doctrine. The majority of Nestorian relics dated between the Tang and the Yuan periods are bronze crosses and tombstone carvings featuring mixed motifs of crosses, flowers, angels, and clouds. Only a few mural paintings and stone carvings have been discovered and identified as the images of Jesus, the angels, and Mary.[10] To certain extent, these texts and relics suggest little importance of Marian devotion and iconography in the Nestorian Church, which may be related to its controversial claim of Mary as the *Christotokos* rather than the *Theotokos*.[11]

Though Catholic theologians had different views on the Immaculate Conception, the church authorities in Rome generally supported popular veneration of Mary through the late

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[8] I quote from Yoshio Saeki's translation of the passage with a few slight modifications, e.g., the name *Tianzhun* 天尊 as the Celestial Worthy instead of "the Lord of Heaven" as translated by Saeki. See Yoshio Saeki 佐伯好郎, *The Nestorian Monument and Relics in China* (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1951), 140.

[9] I quote from James Legge's translation of the passage with a few modifications. See James Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an fu in Shen-hsi, China* (London: Trubner & Co., 1888), 5-7.

[10] Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument and Relics in China*, 408-443; Nicolas Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume One: 635-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 52-59; Gu Weimin 顧衛民, *Jidu zongjiao yishu zaihua fazhanshi* 基督宗教藝術在華發展史 (History of Christian Arts in China) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2005), 1-77. Torii Ryūzō (鳥居龍藏) wrote an article on the stone carvings discovered in Manchuria, which he believed to be the Nestorian relics from the Liao Dynasty (916-1125). See Torii, "景教に関する画像石 (Stone Carvings Related to Nestorianism)," (first published in 考古学雑誌 *Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1937), in 鳥居龍藏全集 (*Complete Works of Torii Ryūzō*, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1976), vol. 6, 605-609. According to Torii's analysis, one picture may likely refer to the episode of the adoration of the Magi at the birth of Jesus (Matthew 2: 1-12). But Mary is not shown in his photo reproduction of the picture. Interestingly, when Saeki mentioned Torii's new discovery in his book, there appear a few more pictures not seen in Torii's article. At least one of them seems to depict Mary holding the child Jesus. It may arguably be one of the earliest Nestorian images of Mary known today. See Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument and Relics in China*, 442-443.

[11] Weng Shaojun 翁紹軍, *Hanyu Jingjiao wendian quanshi* 漢語景教文典詮釋 (Annotations to Chinese Nestorian Texts) (Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, 1995), 22.

Middle Ages. In the mendicant orders, the Franciscans became a leading force in spreading popular and organized forms of Marian devotions. It is reasonable to assume that Franciscan missionaries to the East made similar efforts after they established footholds in Mongolia and China. John of Montecorvino (1247-1328), for example, arrived in Cambalec (i.e., Beijing, the capital of the Mongol-Yuan Empire) in 1294 and stayed there till his death in 1328. By the time the second church building was erected in the city in 1305, Montecorvino realized the need to use Catholic icons in his mission, so he "had six pictures made of the Old and New Testaments for the instruction of the ignorant, and they have inscriptions in Latin, Turkish and Persian, so that all tongues may be able to read them." [12] In this case, the pictures made of biblical texts may likely include those of Jesus and Mary. Montecorvino did not explain in detail on this respect. Interestingly, the inscriptions are said to be written in several different languages, yet without mentioning Chinese and Mongol languages. This could be a drawback of his missionary work. If he was not able to preach the Christian doctrines to Chinese people, it would be difficult for him to effectively promote the European models of Marian devotion in late Yuan China.

Except for a handful of letters and travel writings, Franciscan missionaries left scant detail on their works in China. In the early 14th century, Friar Odoric (Odoric da Pordenone, c. 1265-1331) recorded in his travelogue on a Franciscan residence in Yangzhou.[13] The early missionary endeavours may have contributed to the emergence of a Catholic community that mainly comprised of European merchants and their families. It was in the city of Yangzhou where a Franciscan Marian vestige—Madonna and Child carved on a tombstone—has been discovered and confirmed. (Fig. 1) The tombstone was dedicated to Katerina, the daughter of an Italian merchant named Dominic de Vilionis. A second tombstone was also excavated near that of Katerina, dedicated to Katerina's brother Anthony Vilionis. These tombstones and inscriptions have been studied as the solid evidence of a vibrant Franciscan mission towards the end of Yuan dynasty.[15]

On the front surface of the tombstone, the border is decorated with some floral motif of a non-Chinese style. The part inside consists of two sections. The lower section shows a Latin inscription of the Old Gothic style. It reads:

INNOMINE DÑI AMEN HIC JACET
KATERINA FILIA QONDAM DOMINI
DÑICI DE VILIONIS QUE OBIIT IN

[12] Christopher Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 228-229.
[13] He Gaoji 何高濟, trans., *E-duolike dongyou lu* 鄂多立克东游录 (The Eastern Parts of the World Described by Friar Odoric the Bohemian, of Friuli in the Province of Saint Anthony) (Beijing: Zhong hua shuju, 1981), 70
[15] Francis Rouleau, "The Yangchow Latin Tombstone as a Landmark of Medieval Christianity in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 17*, No. 3/4 (1954): 360-363; Gu Weimin, *Jidu zongjiao yishu zaihua fazhanshi*, 100-101; Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History*, 21-24. This figure and the following two detail figures are from Rouleau's article.

ANNO DOMINI MILEXIMO CCC
XXXX II DE MENSE JUNII

(In the name of the Lord, Amen. Here lies Katerina, daughter of the late Mr. Dominic de Vilionis, who died in the year of the Lord 1342 in the month of June.)[16]

The Latin inscription follows the typical medieval European tradition commemorating a dead family member. Except for the four Chinese characters *Yinwei huoguan* 胤瑋獲觀 (Acquired and viewed by Yinwei) to the left side of the Latin text, likely inscribed at a later time by a certain Chinese collector, there is no other Chinese text on the tombstone. This unusual form reveals the non-Chinese identity of Katerina and her family in Yangzhou, a center of advanced commerce in South China and a popular city for foreign soigneurs since the Song dynasty.

The pictures in the upper section of the tombstone look more striking than the inscription in the lower section. They present a set of vivid scenes on the martyrdom of St. Katherine of Alexandria, who should be the patron saint of Katerina in her life time. (Fig. 2) A Catholic in medieval Europe may not be surprised at seeing these images, as veneration of Katherine has become widely popular from the 10th century onwards, with a fast-growing cult and diverse forms of devotions.[17] However, the legendary accounts of Katherine were most likely unknown to a Chinese in 14th-century Yangzhou, and the martyrdom scenes on the tombstone could be a great shock to him. Katherine is depicted as a topless woman, hands folded in prayer, in two of these scenes. The first one shows her kneeling at a broken spiked wheel of blades, with two winged angels flying above and two dead men lying in front of her. The second one shows her being beheaded by an executioner. In the third scene, Katherine's body is being carried by two angels to a grave, presumably her sepulchre on Mount Sinai. In the last scene at the lower right corner, there appears a monk who kneels on the ground and holds a new-born baby in his arms. This possibly suggests the presentation and the return of the immortal soul of the deceased one to God.[18] Even though the chiselled images are no delicate artwork, they capture the most critical moments of Katherine's martyrdom according to the medieval tradition.

In addition to the graphic illustrations of Katherine's martyrdom, a picture of Madonna and Child appears at the top of the tombstone. To certain extent, it suggests that Marian piety has been deeply embedded in the religious experience of an ordinary Catholic of the time. In fact, some links between Katherine and Mary can be found in many late medieval legends. Katherine, the well-educated virgin daughter of King Costus, was converted to Christianity by Adrian, a hermit who went to Alexandria to find her on behalf of Mary. Katherine was also

[16] The inscription has been transcribed in many modern studies. Here I follow Rouleau's transcription. See Rouleau, "The Yangchow Latin Tombstone as a Landmark of Medieval Christianity in China," 353.
[17] For a study of the early development of medieval European devotions to Katherine, see Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).
[18] Rouleau, "The Yangchow Latin Tombstone as a Landmark of Medieval Christianity in China," 346-365.

said to have gone through a mystical marriage with Christ, presided over by the Holy Mother herself.[19] It is therefore not surprising to see the image of Mary above the martyrdom scenes of Katherine on the tombstone. The unknown engraver adopts the motif of Madonna and Child, and places this prominent icon in a niche-like arch frame at the top of the tombstone. Mary is seated on a chair, wearing a hooded cloak. She holds the child Jesus in her arms. A halo is shown behind her head. This traditional motif highlights Mary's prominent role in the Catholic doctrine. Moreover, the engraver purposefully positions Mary looking downward at the successive events of Katherine's martyrdom, a gesture to show her great compassion and merciful love. One can detect the subtle interplay of power and faith in such an iconographic matrix of ardent devotions and emotional attachments. These images look no more than a simplified version of such motifs as the Madonna and Child and Katherine's martyrdom permeated in medieval arts, but their exhibit in late Yuan China embodied Mary's role as a powerful mediatrix between God and man and a protectress in one's journey to salvation.

Different from the characteristically European inscription, the images on the tombstone carry remarkable Chinese features. The facial contours of Mary, Katherine, the executioner, and the monk show a visible oriental touch. These figures also appear to wear Chinese clothes, in particular the folds of the long sleeves. The angels with two wings and point-tip feet bear a resemblance to both Tang Buddhist *apsaras* and Tang-Yuan Nestorian angels.[20] Furthermore, the seat on which Mary sits is unmistakably a Chinese one, with a circular flat surface and curved-shape legs. This Marian image displays a remarkable mixture of Christian and Chinese components.[21] It is therefore a vivid example of the early conflation of Marian iconography and Chinese culture.

Interestingly, the cloak of Mary and the gown of the monk are dressed in the *zuoren* 左衽 (left-sided lapel) pattern, namely, putting the right front lapel across the chest towards the left-hand side. This pattern has long been taken as a dress code of non-Chinese people, in contrast to the *youren* 右衽 (right-sided lapel) pattern that marked a Han-Chinese identity.[22] Though this subtle treatment is hardly perceptible to a viewer, it indicates the awareness of the engraver, likely a Chinese craftsman, when making the illustrations of non-Chinese figures.

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[19] Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis, eds., *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 5-6; 116.

[20] For some typical images of Buddhist *apsaras* and Chinese immortals, see *Dunhuang: Shuobuwan de gushi* 敦煌：說不完的故事 (Dunhuang: Untold Tales, Untold Riches) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Heritage Museum, 2014), 244-255. For the tombstone images of Nestorian angels, see Wu Wenliang 吳文良, Wu Youxiong 吳幼雄 *Quanzhou zongjiao shike [zengding ben]* 泉州宗教石刻 [增訂本] (Religious Stone Inscriptions in Quanzhou, Expanded Edition) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2005), 365-440.

[21] Richard C. Rudolph, "A Second Fourteenth-century Italian Tombstone in Yangzhou," *Journal of Oriental Studies 13*, No. 2 (1975): 135; Gu Baohu 顧保鵠, "Yangzhou Yuandai Tianzhujiao mubei 揚州元代天主教墓碑 (Catholic Tombstones in Yangzhou during the Yuan Dynasty)," *Hengyi yuekan* 恆毅月刊, No. 2 (2002): 509; and Gu Weimin, *Jidu zongjiao yishu zaihua fazhanshi*, 91-101.

[22] Yang Hao 楊豪, "Woguo gudai zun you bei zuo zhisu yu yizhuo zuoyou ren 我國古代尊右卑左制俗與衣著左右衽 (The Chinese Tradition of Superior Right-side and Inferior Left-side, and the Left-sided and Right-sided Lapels in Clothing), *Lingnan wenshi* 嶺南文史 (*Lingnan Culture and History*), No. 1 (2003), 19-21, 49.

Aside from the Madonna and Child image on the Yangzhou tombstone, Mary was also mentioned in the writings of Franciscan visitors to China. It is worth noting that they often confused her with native Chinese deities, especially Guanyin bodhisattva, mainly due to their physical resemblance and a shared register of protecting power and exemplary virtues. In his 1352 memoir, Giovanni de Marignolli recalled his encounter with a Chinese version of Mary being worshipped in a large temple, "And the image of this Virgin is kept in great state in a temple in Kampsay [Hangzhou], and on the first appearance of the moon in the first month (that is of February, which is the first month among the Cathayers) that New Year's feast is celebrated with great magnificence, and with illumination kept up all the night."[23] This "Virgin" Mary, as a modern scholar argues, should actually be White-robed Guanyin in one of her major temples or pilgrimage sites in Hangzhou.[24] With scarce, vague records of this kind, it would be difficult to know whether there was a parallel development of Guanyin worship and Marian devotion in Yuan China. In any case, the prevalent Chinese devotion to Guanyin could have set a favorable environment for the Franciscan introduction of Mary in either iconographic representations or other forms of popular worship.

Compared to the Nestorians, the Franciscans definitely held Mary in high regard in their missionary work. They made the earliest known attempts to transfer Marian devotions from Europe to China. However, the scant relics and records discussed above leave few traces for a Chinese Marian cult through the Tang and the Yuan periods. Mary was most probably worshipped by a small group of European sojourners and missionaries in China. She remained an obscure figure for centuries, until the Jesuit missionaries arrived in the late 16th century and launched new endeavours to promote her as an unmatched Christian role model for the Chinese people.

III. Mary Advocated and Remodeled by Jesuit Missionaries

In the medieval Catholic teachings, Mary has been understood as a powerful intercessor between God and man. She would pray to God, appease His righteous wrath, and plead for grace and forgiveness on behalf of the faithful. She was also the Mother of Mercy and the Mediatrix of All Grace, because her motherly love built a bridge between Christ and the believers. With great compassion, Mary would use her power to protect the believers from any suffering, danger, and disaster. These claims, reinforced by theological arguments, gave

[23] Henry Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China* (London: Hakluyr Society, 1913), 269.
[24] Arnold Lauren, "Folk Goddess or Madonna? Early Missionary Encounters with the Image of Guanyin," in *Encounters and Dialogues: Changing Perspectives on Chinese-Western Exchanges from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, edited by Xiaoxin Wu (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2005), 229.

shape to a booming Marian culture that reached every section of the Christian society through the late Middle Ages.[25]

In the early 16th century, the Protestant leaders posed a serious challenge to Catholic Marian devotions. As a new force rising from the Counter-Reformation movement, the Jesuits played a key role in promoting Marian piety. Many of them had been the active members of Marian sodalities before they embarked a mission to China. When Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) studied law in the Jesuit College in Rome around 1570, he "became a member of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and regulated his life according to its rules, under the direction of its reverend prefect."[26] Giulio Aleni (1582-1649) was another example. He joined a Marian congregation when studying at the Brescia College in the late 1590s.[27] Without doubt, the popular devotion and confraternal experience in Europe motivated these Jesuit missionaries to advocate the veneration of Mary in the early years of their China mission.

Since the mid-16th century, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Augustinians have subsequently launched their missions in Asia. However, their efforts to enter the Middle Kingdom (i.e., China) by way of Manila did not succeed until the 1630s. By then, the Jesuits under the Portuguese *Padroado* had already founded a network of missionary footholds in both northern and southern regions of China. Over the next century, they outnumbered the missionaries of other Catholic orders in China.[28] They also published a series of catechetical, exegetical, and liturgical works on Mary. It is therefore a justifiable view that they made the most contributions to the emergence of a Chinese Marian culture.

Upon the arrival of the first Jesuits, China remained a heathen land under the profound influences of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. The Sinocentric mentality, as seen in such concepts as *Tianxia* 天下 (All under Heaven) and *Hua-yi* 華夷 (Chinese-barbarian distinction), formed a strong cultural imperative to the foreign missionaries. Starting with Ricci, the early Jesuits adopted an adaptive approach and took gradual steps to introduce the Christian faith to the Chinese people. They made continuous efforts to promote varied forms of Marian piety in the first decades of their China mission. Some forms were distinctively foreign, while other forms have been largely localized. As the result, a full-fledged Chinese Marian culture thrived in the second half of the 17th century.

Chronologically, the Jesuits' campaign to advocate and remodel Mary have undergone two stages—the first stage with introductory and catechetical works from 1580 to 1620, and the second stage with doctrine-focused and liturgical works from 1620 to 1700. In the first

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[25] Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 191-282.

[26] Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher (New York, Random House, 1953), xi.

[27] Mario Colpo, "Giulio Aleni's Cultural and Religious Background," in "*Scholar from the West": Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582—1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China* (MSMS XLII), edited by Tiziana Lippiello and Roman Malek (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1997), 73-74.

[28] Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume One, 635-1800*, 307-308.

stage, Ricci took the lead to publish a series of religious and scientific works in the name of *Tianxue* 天學, or the Learning from Heaven. Though he did stress the key role of Mary in his Chinese writings, Ricci frequently recorded in his journals on how Mary became the central figure in public or private occasions and received attention of Chinese audience. In addition to the physical attractiveness of Mary, these representations also emphasized on her compassion, virtues, and protecting power. Major Marian texts, e.g., the *Ave Maria* and the Rosary, have also been translated into Chinese. In the second stage, Chinese Mariological works, including biographical narratives, liturgical prayers, and exegetical texts, were published to elaborate on the Marian dogmas in theological terms. Though the missionaries stationed at different places, their writings reflected a collective effort to build the doctrinal and liturgical foundations for a bloom of Marian devotions towards the end of the 17th century. In the two-stage development, one may discover a practice-oriented pattern of Chinese Marian devotions in contrast with the prevailing doctrine-based tradition in medieval Europe.

1. Mary in Visual Representations

In their introduction of Mary, the early Jesuits in China preferred to the use of various forms of visual representations, including statues, paintings, and print illustrations. Ricci recorded many occasions where Marian images were presented by the first Jesuits before the Chinese audience. In one occasion in 1583, Ricci and Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) received the permission of Wang Pan 王泮, the Prefect of Zhaoqing 肇慶, to build the first Jesuit residence. To show their gratitude to the Prefect, they offered him some European objects as presents. Among them, there was a statue of Mary. Ricci recorded,

> This was all very new to the Chinese people, something as yet unheard of, and a tremendous crowd had gathered for the occasion. The field in which the Flowery Tower was being built was so crowded with a curious multitude, anxious to see the foreign priests, that the Governor and his guard, even with all his authority, could not pass through it. The people were astonished beyond words when they first saw the triangular prism of glass, intended for the former Governor, and they stared in surprise at a little statue of the Blessed Virgin. Those who saw the glass at close view simply stood in mute admiration. This was particularly true of the Magistrates who accompanied the Governor, and the more they praised it the more they aroused the curiosity of the multitude. …The triangular glass prism, which they called the priceless stone, was shown to everyone that asked to see it, as were also the books, the statue of the Blessed Virgin and other things of European make, which they considered beautiful because of their novelty.[30]

In this occasion, the statue of Mary was seen as one of the marvellous European objects. The missionaries did not specify its religious function, but the statue obviously stimulated great curiosity and amazement of the Chinese audience.

[30] Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 150-151.

Chinese exotic experience of the Marian icons can be seen in another occasion recorded by Ricci. After his arrival at Beijing, Ricci presented a statue of Mary among other tributary objects to Emperor Wanli 萬曆 (1563-1620). According to his record, the emperor seemed to be astonished at seeing the statue of Jesus crucified on the Cross. He claimed that he must be the living God. The emperor then requested the statue of the Blessed Virgin be delivered to his mother. She likewise was amazed at such an unusual foreign object. The statues were placed in a treasure vault, and they were occasionally shown to the court officials. Emperor Wanli was said to have paid respect to the statues and burned incenses before them.[31] This missionary narrative was somewhat exaggerated for propaganda purpose. It is more possible that the emperor and the royal family treated the statues of Jesus and Mary as tributaries from the West, and they would place them in the treasure vault more for an exotic taste than any interest in the Christian religion.

Nonetheless, the Jesuits' presentations of Mary did arouse a sense of religious devotion at times. Ricci and his fellows had to remain cautious, because the Chinese audience often misunderstood this prominent Christian icon. The episode below, for example, took place shortly after they set a foothold in Zhaoqing. Ricci wrote,

> The Mission House, as it was called, had two rooms on either side, with an open hall space between, which served as a chapel, with an altar in the center and above it a picture of the Madonna. … The Blessed Virgin is known as The Glorious Mother of God. When people came to visit the Fathers, Magistrates and other holders of literary degrees, the common people, and even those who offered sacrifice to idols, everyone in short, paid reverence to the Madonna in her picture above the altar, with the customary bows and kneeling and touching of the forehead to the floor. All of this was done with an air of real religious sentiment. They never ceased to admire the beauty and the elegance of this painting; the coloring, the very natural lines and the lifelike posture of the figure. Before long it became evident, and for several reasons, that it would be better to remove the picture of the Virgin Mother from above the altar and replace it with one of Christ the Saviour. First, so that they would not believe, as rumor had already announced, that we adored a woman as our God; and secondly, that they might more easily be taught the doctrine of the Word made Flesh.[32]

Though the Jesuits were eager to advocate Marian devotion for the missionary cause, they would not risk giving the Chinese the impression that they worshiped Mary in the first place and above Christ, the incarnated Lord of Heaven. At this moment, Ricci tried to avoid any suspicious veneration to Mary, including the *kowtow* (prostration) before her icons, which could be easily equated with some native Chinese idol worships.

Nicolò Longobardo (1559-1654), who worked in the Shaozhou mission in the late 1590s, had to deal with a similar problem. During his visit to a village, Longobardo was received by a crowd of villagers who came to hear his sermon. In the reception hall, he saw "a prominent

[31] Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 372.
[32] Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 155.

picture of the Blessed Virgin, holding the child Jesus, with John the Baptist in adoration." The villagers called her "the Mother of God and the Queen of all queens." They however did not know the basic Catholic doctrines associated with Mary, and they simply put her icon in the midst of many idols. Longobardo did not criticize such a problematic devotion as his starting point. Rather, he took this opportunity to preach "a sermon on the God-Man and the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, and told them the whole story of John the Baptist," and as a result, the villagers "were particularly pleased with his story of the Visitation and with the narrative of how the unborn John was affected by the approach to his Saviour." Seeing that his message had moved the audience, Longobardo further explained to them on the fault of idol worship. The villagers accepted his teaching. They took down the idols from the place of adoration and burned them on fire in the courtyard. Reciting Marian prayers, Longobardo put the picture of Madonna and Child on the altar, and "then told them all to kneel down and ask pardon of God for having paid divine honor to false gods, to whom it did not belong, and to promise that henceforth they would adore only one God, the Creator and the Moderator of all things."[33] In this dramatic episode, Longobardo intended to remove the idols and distinguish the orthodox Christian belief from the heretic Chinese beliefs. Interestingly, he did not point out the more nuanced difference between the Lord of Heaven and the Blessed Virgin. Though he described God as the Saviour of the world, the villagers seemed to be more attracted by Mary simply because of her role the Mother of God.

The early Jesuits not only presented European statues, paintings, and print illustrations of Mary to the Chinese audience, but they also had the most popular ones reproduced in China. Around 1619, João da Rocha (1583-1623) published his *Song nianzhu guicheng* 誦念珠規程 (Rules for Reciting the Rosary), with fifteen print illustrations side by side with the fifteen prayers of the Chinese Rosary.[35] The illustrations were modeled after the copper engravings of Jerome Nadal (1507-1580)'s *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (1593). Although Nadal's original work was intended for one's meditations on the life of Jesus, da Rocha reproduced fifteen images from it to aid Chinese converts' reading and reciting of the Rosary, which had been a very popular prayer dedicated to Mary for centuries. A subtle shift of focus from the spiritual devotion to Jesus to worship of Mary is discernable in this cross-cultural transfer of these images.

In the illustration of Annunciation in da Rocha's work, the composition and artistic style reveal a typical Chinese taste. The layout of multiple scenes in Nadal's original illustration

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[33] Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 465.

[35] The fifteen illustrations include Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Purification, Jesus' Disputation with the Teachers, Jesus Prays in the Garden, Flagellation of Jesus, Jesus is Crowned with Thorns, Jesus Carries the Cross to Mount Calvary, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension to Heaven, Pentecost, and the Death of Mother of God. The copy in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus only contains fourteen prints. The last scene on Mary's coronation is missing. See Nicolas Standaert and Adrian Dudink, *eds., Yesuhui Luoma danganguan Ming-Qing Tianzhujiao wenxian* 耶穌會羅馬檔案館明清天主教文獻 *(Chinese Christian texts from the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus*, hereafter as *CCT ARSI*) (Taipei: Ricci Institute, 2002), Vol. 1, 520, 524, 528, 532, 536, 540, 544, 548, 552, 556, 560, 564, 568, 572.

(Fig. 3) has been changed to a single scene in the Chinese version (Fig. 4). Gabriel, who descends from heaven in the original, is shown as a dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost. Mary looks rather like a Chinese young lady, wearing a white robe and kneeling down at a Chinese style table. The decorated bed behind her, the screen of a landscape painting, the gridded windows, the roof tiles, the stairs in the courtyard, as well as the banana tree and rockery in the backyard, all contribute to the setting of an upper-class or well-to-do Chinese household. In this sense, da Rocha intentionally transformed the image of Mary from a humble European maiden to a noble Chinese woman.[38] The Chinese audience could feel more comfortable with this familiar setting. They may also assume a highborn social status of Mary as the mother of the incarnated Lord of Heaven.

More images of Mary appear in two later illustrated works—Giulio Aleni's *Tianzhu jiansheng chuxiang jingjie* 天主降生出像經解 (Explanations on the Images of the Incarnated Lord of Heaven, 1637) and Johann Adam Shall von Bell (1592-1666)'s *Jincheng shuxiang* 進呈書像 (Books and Pictures Presented to the Emperor, 1640). Like da Rocha's Rosary, these two works were intended for the missionary cause. They served as the catechetical tools to represent fundamental Catholic doctrines, the aids for devotional contemplations and prayers, as well as the charms in performing miracles of protection, healing, and exorcism.[40] They offered further evidence of the Jesuits' continuous efforts to adapt European Marian devotions to Chinese culture.

In the first edition of Aleni's *Tianzhu jiansheng chuxiang jingjie*, there are a total of 56 illustrations covering the major gospel episodes on the life of Jesus. They are mostly based on the illustrations in Nadal's *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines*. Despite the fact that Aleni and da Rocha shared the same European source, the Chinese illustrations in their works reflect many remarkable differences. For example, compared with the Annunciation scene of da Rocha, Aleni's illustration looks more like a faithful reproduction of Nadal's original. (Fig. 5) It keeps all the sections in the foreground and background, and follows the same proportional scale as in the original. Done with meticulous details, this Chinese version reproduces the effects of perspective and chiaroscuro in accordance with the original European artwork.

On the other hand, one can still recognize a few changes in Aleni's reproduction. In the smaller scene of the crucifixion on the left side, the two criminals being hanged on the crosses disappear in the Chinese version. Only two figures, not four as shown in the original, are seen standing by Jesus on the cross. This omission could be due to the technical disadvantage of woodcut printing, which can hardly reach the same level of precision as copper engraving to represent miniature figures and objects.

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[38] Jeremy Clarke gives a detailed analysis of da Rocha's work, especially the Annunciation scene in comparison with Nadal's original, but he does not recognize the subtle change of Mary's social status in line with household settings. see Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History*, 42-45.

[40] Eugenio Menegon, "Jesuit Emblematica in China: The Use of European Allegorical Images in Flemish Engravings Described in the *Kouduo richao* (ca. 1640)," *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies*, 55 (2007): 392-394.

Another noticeable change is the layout of the textual descriptions. While Nadal provides the biblical reference of "*Luc. i.*" (i.e., first chapter of the Gospel of Luke) under the Latin title "ANNVNCIATIO," Aleni removes it and gives only the Chinese title "Shengmu ling shangzhu jiangyu zhibao 聖母領上主降孕之報 (The Holy Mother Being Announced about the Incarnation of the Lord)." Both the Chinese title and the textual descriptions below are written in a Chinese pattern, namely, from right to left and from top to bottom. The Latin alphabetical order of A to H is likewise replaced by a set of Chinese heavenly-stem characters from *Jia* 甲 to *Xin* 辛. Lastly, the engraver's signature "Hieronymus Wierx Sculp." at the bottom of the original picture is removed in the Chinese version. There is no trace of the craftsman who may have been involved in the reproduction process.

Though Aleni keeps most of the thematic and stylistic components from Nadal's original illustration, the changes listed above suggest his conscious effort to adopt the Chinese way of reading and writing. In so doing, his work should be more easily understood by the Chinese readers. These Chinese illustrations of mixed forms and styles further underline the twofold Christian–Confucian identity that Aleni has strived for throughout his missionary life in late Ming Fujian.[41]

In 1640, Schall published his *Jincheng shuxiang*, a work containing 46 print pictures and textual descriptions. It was translated from a Flemish book (published in 1623) on the life of Jesus, which took as model Nadal's masterpiece and other print illustrations. He submitted it to Emperor Chongzhen 崇祯 (1611-1644) together with some European engravings donated by Duke Maximilian I of Bavaria (1573–1651). Mary shows up in about ten illustrations in *Jincheng shuxiang*. The images are made into a simplified version of the European originals, with obvious omissions and changes, and they mostly follow the conventions in Chinese print illustrations. Here Schall's picture of Annunciation (Fig. 6) can be compared with its possible European model made by Raphaël Sadler II (1584-?), a well-known Flemish engraver of the time, as well as the earlier Chinese versions of da Rocha and Aleni.[43] In Schall's illustration, the eyes and facial contours of Mary, Gabriel, and the cherubs bear a distinctive Chinese style. Though Mary wears a European cloak featuring a hood, puffed sleeves with tight cuffs, long drapes, and a waist sash, the delineations have no visible trace of chiaroscuro, or the shading effect through a volume of light and shadow shapes. The single lines that depict curvy and irregular folds of Mary's cloak, also seen in da Rocha's and Aleni's versions, resemble a typical Chinese portrait. The same linear form is applied to the other parts of the illustration, including the canopy, the table and vase, the arched door, and the clouds.

There are some more significant changes in Schall's illustration. In the European model,

[41] For more analysis of Aleni's Chinese illustrations, see Song Gang, *Giulio Aleni, Kouduo richao, and Christian-Confucian Dialogism in Late Ming Fujian* (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, forthcoming in 2018), Chapter 5.2.2.

[43] For a study of Schall's work, see Nicolas Standaert, *An Illustrated Life of Christ Presented to the Chinese Emperor: The History of Jincheng shuxiang (1640)* (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2007), 11-78.

the dark background in the middle section suggests the barely recognizable interior side of Mary's house. In the Chinese version, however, a certain object resembling the bottom of a square-shaped monument shows up behind the canopy and the table. It is not seen in the European model. Schall may possibly add it for a purpose to fill the blank part that has no shading effect, yet the work is done in a somewhat awkward way, as if the Annunciation takes place at a grand hall or on open ground.

On the other hand, two special components in the European model—the old man and the boys surrounded by clouds at the top and the tile floor at the bottom—disappear in Schall's illustration. The former represents a common motif in European arts. The possible reason for its absence in the Chinese version may be the technically more difficult task to reproduce a crowd of small figures with a Chinese woodcut print. Another reason could be culture-related, because the presence of the old man and the naked boys before Mary, a true virgin according to Schall's description, may arouse confusion or even suspicion of the Chinese audience. The dove is moved from the center to the upper right corner of the picture, apparently for the purpose to fill the blank part without the old man and the boys. As to the square tile floor, its checkboard layout with receding lines in the original shows a vanishing point that follows a standard representation of the geometric perspective in European arts. This component is absent in the Chinese version. The square-shaped parts, including the table, the base of the lectern, and the fillets of the monument, are framed by horizontal, vertical, and parallel lines. They seem to produce a somehow three-dimensional effect, yet not in a realistic standard. The main feature of Schall's illustration is tied with an isometric perspective that yields multiple vanishing points, a method commonly seen in Chinese artistic compositions.

The aforementioned examples from the illustrated works of da Rocha, Aleni, and Shcall are solid evidence of how the early Jesuits in China continued to advocate Marian devotion by way of visual representations. Their illustrations of Mary shared the same group of European sources, but they differed widely from each other in thematic, stylistic, and technical aspects. Meanwhile, the reproduced Marian images revealed the Jesuits' strategic adaptation, though at varying degrees, to Chinese thoughts, artistic tastes, as well as reading and writing habits. The confluence of European and Chinese styles in Marian iconography not only contributed to thriving Catholic missions through the 17th-century, but it also marked a crucial stage of the remodeling of Mary in late imperial Chinese society.

2. Mary in Popular Prayers

Along with their visual representations, the early Jesuits also translated many popular Marian prayers into Chinese. These texts explained the basic Christian doctrines in a simple style. When Ruggieri published *Xinbian Xizhuguo Tianzhu shilu* 新編西竺國天主實錄 (New Edition of True Record of the Lord of Heaven from West India, 1584), he attached at the end

two short texts: The Ten Commandments and a tract of *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster*.[44] Mary in *Ave Maria* is called "Xian Maliya 仙媽利呀" and "Tianzhu Shengmu Niangniang 天主聖母娘娘." The unusual name and title carry subtle implications. While "Maliya" is the transliteration of "Maria," the prefix "Xian" has long been used as a Daoist reference to immortals and supernatural beings. Therefore, by translating the Latin "Sancta Maria" into the Chinese "Xian Maliya," Ruggieri possibly had a twofold motive to render Mary's name in the Chinese language and to highlight her special status in the Christian religion.

The more intriguing part lies in Mary's Chinese title "Tianzhu Shengmu Niangniang," which literally means the Holy Queen Mother of the Lord of Heaven. Ruggieri adopted two Chinese terms—"Shengmu" and "Niangniang"—that have often been used in official records (both may refer to an empress dowager, an empress, or a high-status concubine in the imperial family) and religious texts in Daoism, Buddhism, as well as folk religions (e.g., Dongling Shengmu 東陵聖母, Taiyuan Shengmu 太元聖母, Shengmu Moye 聖母摩耶, Wu Taihou Niangniang 武太后娘娘, Jiutian xuannü Niangniang 九天玄女娘娘). During the Ming period, a combined use of the two terms appeared in some genres of vernacular literature, including the novel *Sansui Pingyao zhuan* 三遂平妖傳 (The Three Sui Quash the Demons' Revolt, 14th century) and the dramas *Handan ji* 邯鄲記 (A Dream in Handan, 17th century) and *Feng Tianming Sanbao xia Xiyang* 奉天命三保下西洋 (Ma Sanbao's Voyage to the Western Ocean under the Imperial Order, 17th century). The compound title "Shengmu Niangniang" normally referred to a goddess who not only possessed miraculous power but also achieved a noble status of womanhood. In the above two late Ming dramas, the title is attached to Tianfei 天妃 (Empress of Heaven), more often called Mazu 媽祖 (Maternal Ancestor), who has been one of the popular goddesses across China's coast regions since the Song Dynasty. Though this term was often linked with "heretic" Chinese beliefs, Ruggieri did not bother to adopt it as the honorific title of Mary. It suggested that Mary as the Mother of God should deserve no less veneration than native Chinese goddesses bearing the same title.[45]

Ruggieri employed the single term "Shengmu" as the title of Mary in two of his Chinese poems composed between 1582 and 1588. One referred to the "immaculate" Holy Mother and the virgin birth of Jesus, while the other mentioned the birthday (i.e., feast) of the Holy Mother and the blessing of her eternal life.[46] This single title and the composite title above revealed Ruggieri's conscious attempt to adapt to the popular goddess traditions in China.[47] He appropriated two core meanings in these terms—power and virtue—and fused them into

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[44] Michele Ruggieri, *Xinbian Xizhuguo Tianzhu shilu*, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 84.

[45] For a comparative study on Mary and Mazu, see Roderich Ptak, "Haishen Mazu yu Shengmu Maliya zhi bijiao 海神媽祖與聖母瑪利亞之比較，約公元 1400 年-1700 年 [Sea Goddess Mazu and Saint Mary Compared (1400~1700)], translated by Xiao Wenshuai 肖文帥, *Aomen yanjiu* 澳門研究 (*Macau Studies*), No. 4 (2011.12): 28-35.

[46] Albert Chan, "Michele Ruggieri, S.J. (1543-1607) and His Chinese Poems," *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies*, 41 (1993): 129-176.

[47] Dai Guoqing 代國慶, "Ming-Qing zhiji Shengmu Maliya de Zhognguo xingxiang yanjiu 明清之際聖母瑪利亞的中國形象研究," (PhD Diss., South China Normal University, 2010), 101-103.

his representation of Mary in a major Catholic prayer. The special treatment vividly showed how the first Jesuits in China launched their initial efforts to remodel Mary in the translation of liturgical texts.

Nonetheless, Ruggieri's Chinese version of *Ave Maria* did not serve as a model for the later Jesuits. The translation is not faithful to the standard Latin version, the language sounds colloquial, and there appear some dubious Chinese expressions on Mary's identity. Ricci and other Jesuits never used the compound title "Shengmu niangniang" again in their translations. As is shown in the chart below, the later Jesuits' versions of *Ave Maria* represented a faithful and elegant style. The doubtful expressions, such as Xian, shenyun, Resuo, and Niangniang, have been removed. The Chinese names of Jesus and Mary became standardized, and Mary was given the title of "Tianzhu Shengmu" in a consistent manner. Meanwhile, a set of special terms were adopted, including *e'lajiya* 額辣濟亞 (grace), *zanmei* 讚美 (benediction), *qi* 祈 (pray), and *sihou* 死候 (hour of our death). The religious terminology certainly highlighted the scriptural nature of this important Marian text. These subtle changes reflect the Jesuits' endeavours to create a composite image of Mary, aligned with the orthodox Catholic belief on the one hand and adaptive to the Chinese cultural imperative on the other.

Year	Author	Title	Translation of *Ave Maria* in Chinese
1584	Michele Ruggieri	新編西竺國天主實錄	拜告 仙媽利呀天主聖母娘娘，爾有大福，娠孕嘸哳，普世婦人，惟爾最為尊大，得近天主。我聖母娘娘，為我告于天主，赦宥我等在生罪過，及死後魂靈。亞明。
c. 1610	Matteo Ricci (?)	聖經約錄	亞物瑪利亞，滿被額辣濟亞者，主與爾偕焉。女中爾為讚美，爾胎子耶穌並為讚美。天主聖母瑪利亞，為我等罪人，今祈天主，及我等死候。亞孟。
1615	Alfonso Vagnone	天主教要解略	亞物瑪利亞，滿被額辣濟亞者，主與爾偕焉。女中爾為殊福，胎子耶穌更為殊福。天主聖母瑪利亞，為我等罪人，今祈天主，及我等死候。亞孟。
1619	João da Rocha	念珠默想規條	亞物瑪利亞，滿被額辣濟亞者，主與爾偕焉。女中爾為讚美，爾胎子耶穌並為讚美。天主聖母瑪利亞，為我等罪人，今祈天主，及我等死候。亞孟。
1650-1700	Anonymous	天主教要	亞物瑪利亞，滿被額辣濟亞者，主與爾偕焉。女中爾為讚美，爾胎子耶穌並為讚美。天主聖母瑪利亞，為我等罪人，今祈天主，及我等死候。亞孟。
c. 1665	Lodovico Buglio	聖教日課	亞物瑪利亞，滿被額辣濟亞者，主與爾偕焉。女中爾為讚美，爾胎子耶穌並為讚美。天主聖母瑪利亞，為我等罪人，今祈天主，及我等死候。亞孟。

The Rosary was another widely circulated prayer in medieval Europe. Most of its early versions were related to the psalters, written for lay people who could not meditate on the detailed life stories of Jesus and Mary. A rosary text was usually short and easy to understand, so that the believers could freely choose different parts in it for meditation. As a result, from the late 15th to the mid-16th centuries, there appeared rosaries of different sets (with 200, 165, 150, 93, 63, 33, 12, and 5 meditations). Pope Pius V (1504-1572) endorsed a standard version

in 1569 in the papal bull *Consueverunt Romani Pontifices*, defining the Rosary as a simple form of prayers "in which the same most Blessed Virgin is venerated by the angelic greeting repeated one hundred and fifty times, that is, according to the number of the Davidic Psalter, and by the Lord's Prayer with each decade. Interposed with these prayers are certain meditations showing forth the entire life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, thus completing the method of prayer devised by the Fathers of the Holy Roman Church."[50] Under the support of Church authorities, there emerged a boom of rosary texts. They contributed to the prevalence of the Marian cult in the late medieval period, thus providing a solid ground for the translation work of early Jesuit missionaries in China.

During the first half of the 17th century, the Jesuits published several rosary texts in Chinese, including *Song nianzhu guicheng* by da Rocha and *Nianzhu moxiang guicheng* 念珠默想規程 (Rules for Meditations in the Rosary, c. 1635) by Longobardo.[51] Da Rocha's work seems to follow the 1569 standard version, while Longobardo's work contains 33 meditations on Jesus and 63 meditations on Mary. A textual comparison of these two works reveals both similarities and differences in the ways they represent Mary. In *Song nianzhu guicheng*, the fifteen meditations are divided into three parts, with five meditations in each part: five joyful mysteries, five sorrowful mysteries, and five glorious mysteries.[53] At the beginning of this work, there is a catechetical conversation between the *shi* 師 (master, or priest) and the *xue* 學 (student, or catechumen),

> **Master:** What do you do as a daily practice to nourish your animate soul and maintain your love to Christ?
> **Student:** Every day I recite the entire piece of the Rosary and I meditate on the fifteen mysteries, which include the acts of my Lord Jesus in his whole life.
> **Master:** What do you mean by "the entire piece of the Rosary" and how many parts are there in it?
> **Student:** For the entire piece I shall recite *Ave Maria* 150 times and 15 times *Gloria Patri*. It is divided into three parts. In each part I shall recite 50 times *Ave Maria* and five times *Gloria Patri*. While reciting the first part I need an hour to meditate on the first five mysterious events. While reciting the middle part I need an hour to meditate the next five mysterious events in the middle. While reciting the ending part I need another hour to meditate the last five mysterious events.[54]

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[50] Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State, 1997) 22-26.
[51] Da Rocha's work is bound with Rocha's *Tianzhu Shengjiao qimeng* 天主聖教啟蒙, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 515-574. A modern reprint of Longobardo's work is in *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian sanbian* 天主教東傳文獻三編 (Third Series of Archives on Catholic Missions to the East, hereafter as *WXSB*) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1998), vol. 3, 1111-1145.
[53] The fifteen pictorial mysteries were arranged in order: The joys include the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation, and the Finding; The sorrows include the Agony, the Flagellation, the Thorns, the Carrying, and the Crucifixion; The glories include the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Pentecost, the Assumption, and the Coronation.
[54] Da Rocha, *Tianzhu Shengjiao qimeng*, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 515-516.

The conversation goes on to present all fifteen mysteries one by one, with a brief summary for each. For the last one of the five glorious mysteries, the *xue* answers, "The Lord of Heaven appointed the Holy Mother [in a position] above the angels of nine ranks, so she can be the mother of heaven and earth as well as the patroness of human beings."[55] Here Mary's unique role between God and man is clearly defined in three key aspects—her superior status in a religious hierarchy, her resourceful motherhood, and her great power to protect the believers.

In the main body of his work, da Rocha employs a number of eulogistic expressions to emphasize on the above key aspects of Mary. They include, for example, the most virtuous and the most blissful virgin, the mother of angels and men, the mother of grace and mercy, the comforter of those in suffering, and the supreme mother and the prominent empress of heaven and earth. As discussed before, when reproducing the illustrations from Nadal's original work, da Rocha intentionally made Marian images of a Chinese style in company with the fifteen meditative prayers. The parallel visual and textual representations further reinforce the varied honorific titles of Mary, thereby highlighting her exalted role as the mediatrix between God and man. It is reasonable to argue that the simple texts and familiar illustrations have greatly facilitated the Chinese believers to go through meditative exercises and take a share in their devotion to the Holy Mother.

In comparison, Longobardo's work contains more pieces for meditation on the lives of Jesus and Mary, yet without any illustration. Its main body appears to follow one of the popular rosary texts in medieval Europe.[56] Unlike da Rocha's long texts (roughly between 150 and 200 characters) for each prayer, most of Longobardo's texts for meditation are very short. The shortest one has only ten characters. The reason for such a structural difference may possibly be due to the extensive list of meditative topics in Longobardo's work and his emphasis on the counting of the beads in meditation. For the part on Jesus, he explains, "When one picks up a bead, one should recite *Gloria Patri* once and *Ave Maria* once. In this way one can memorize these prayers. It is the standard practice to recite it 33 times."[57] In the part on Mary, Longobardo also gives a description on the counting of 63 beads in accordance with the major episodes in her life. He further mentions six more beads that serve the need to divide the 63 beads by ten. As a result, the work looks more like a concise guidebook for meditation, featuring a concurrent use of bead-counts and key topics.

Despite the structural difference, the rosary texts of Longobardo and da Rocha share some noticeable similarities. Both stress the importance of meditative prayers, which serve the purpose of spiritual exhortation and help increase one's devotion to the Lord and Mary. In addition, when Longobardo explains on the special role of Mary in the Catholic faith, he lists some key points that correspond to those in da Rocha's work. In the final three bead-counts and key topics concluding the whole rosary text, Longobardo writes,

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[55] Ibid., 519.
[56] Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*, 115, Fig. 31b.
[57] Longobardo, *Nianzhu moxiang guicheng*, in *WXSB*, vol. 3, 1111.

> The first point one should meditate is that the Holy Mother, sitting on the right of the Holy Son, becomes our loving mother and receives the appointment to be our patroness.
>
> The second point one should meditate is that the Holy Mother has great power in heaven, and all kinds of grace bestowed by the Lord to man will be handled by her.
>
> The third point one should meditate is that the Holy Mother is the most virtuous and the most gracious, and everyone who sincerely venerates her and follows her model will be rescued and accompanied by her to Heaven.[59]

One can immediately recognize the resemblance between these three key topics and the key aspects about Mary in da Rocha's work. Longobardo likewise has no hesitation in underlining Mary's superior status (sitting by the side of Christ in heaven, and serving as the patroness of all men), her great power (handling the grace of God, and coming to rescue of the faithful), and her model of motherhood and womanly virtues. In another Marian prayer *Shengmu dexu daowen* 聖母德敘禱文 (Prayer on the Virtues of the Holy Mother, translation of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, c. 1625), Longobardo introduces a set of honorific titles of Mary in connection with the same three key topics. She is the beloved mother of the Lord of Heaven, the purest and immaculate mother, the intelligent, respectful, loyal, and merciful virgin, the mirror of justice, the healer of sick people, and the comforter of those in suffering. More prominently, she is the Queen of angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and saints.[60] This Chinese version of Marian litany survived through the later generations, and it is still being used by Chinese Catholics today.

The above analysis of several early Chinese Marian prayers shows how these devotional texts shared a group of key terms in promoting Mary as the mediatrix between God and man, the patroness of the faithful, and the model of womanhood. The Jesuits and missionaries of other Catholic orders continued to publish Marian prayers in Chinese, and they also compiled and revised the most popular Marian prayers in varied editions of *Shengmu rike* 聖母日課 (Offices of Mary). Their works in many ways revealed the interweaving of virtue, power, and faith in the formation of a composite image of Mary in 17th-century China.

3. Mary in Mariological Texts

Despite the spread of Marian images and prayers during the late Ming period, the Jesuits remained cautious at some potential risks in the formation of early Chinese Marian devotions. One risk was the misconception of Mary as a goddess, and at times she was even misunderstood as God himself. Another risk was the confusion of Mary and Guanyin due to their doctrinal and iconographic similarities. To avoid the problematic understandings among

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[59] Ibid., vol. 3, 1144-1145.

[60] Longobardo's *Shengmu dexu daowen* was later collected in *Shengjiao rike* 聖教日課 (Daily Practices of the Holy Religion, c. 1637), vol. 1, folios 24a-19b.

both converts and non-believers, the Jesuits published a group of Mariological texts, including biographies, catechisms, and exegeses, to present the fundamental Catholic doctrines on Mary. They carefully followed the authoritative views of the Church and the scholastic arguments of medieval theologians on those key Marian dogmas, including the immaculate conception and Mary's perpetual virginity. At the same time, they consciously modified and reinterpreted these concepts to accommodate the dominant Chinese ways of thinking, especially Confucian ideology and morality. As it turned out, a syncretic form of Chinese Mariology gradually took shape towards the end of the 17th century.

The Immaculate Conception was one of the fundamental Marian dogmas in the Catholic Church. Lying at the core of the dogma was the belief that, at the time of her conception in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, Mary has already been immune from all stain of original sin and any personal sin under God's grace and preservation. The doctrine contained a twofold meaning. On the one hand, Mary was believed to have been conceived by a biological means, but God interfered at the moment of her conception to preserve her "immaculate" or stainless nature. On the other hand, by receiving this singular privilege granted by God, Mary has been predetermined in her election to the divine motherhood through the merits of her son Jesus, rather than her own merits, so she became the only human who was born of perfection without being tainted by original sin.[63] Some other principal Marian dogmas, such as her moral perfection and her mediatrix role between God and man, were partly based upon the concept of the Immaculate Conception.

In recognition of its importance, the early Jesuits in China took much effort to rationalize and justify the orthodox Catholic definition of the Immaculate Conception. Alfonso Vagnone (1568-1640), for example, discussed the concept in two of his Chinese works. In *Tianzhu jiaoyao jielüe* 天主教要解略 (Brief Explanations of *Tianzhu jiaoyao*, 1615), he explains on the phrase *Zhu yu er xie yan* 主與爾偕 (i.e., Dóminus técum) that appears in the Chinese translations of *Ave Maria*,

> When the Holy Mother was in the womb of her mother (i.e., St. Anne), the Lord of Heaven already showed great love and care to her. Therefore, at the time of the intercourse of the soul and the body, she was not affected by original sin. After she came out of her mother's womb, she was not in touch with any stain of the world. Both her soul and her body were extraordinarily crystal and pure. Though the angels and saints may stay together with the Lord, it seems better that they stay with the Holy Mother and have a more intimate relationship with her.[64]

Here Vagnone mentions the great love of God which enabled Mary to be free from the effects of *yuanzui* 元罪 (original sin) and *shichen* 世塵 (personal sin). According to the biblical narrative, the phrase Dóminus técum was proclaimed by the angel Gabriel when he came to

[63] Rubin, *Mother of God*, 303-305.
[64] Vagnone, *Tianzhu jiaoyao jielüe*, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 141-142.

Mary to announce her virgin birth of Jesus. Vagnone's explanation suggests that he adopts the influential views of medieval theologians, especially St. Augustine's view of a total denial of every sort of sin associated with Mary.[65]

In another work *Shengmu xingshi* 聖母行實 (Biography of the Holy Mother, 1631), Vagnone presents a survey of key Marian dogmas in accordance with the orthodox teachings of the Church. On the Immaculate Conception, he argues,

> All creatures at the time of the intercourse of the soul and the body are tainted by the disease of their first ancestors, which is original sin. As far as one is tainted by original sin, one is endowed with a bad and weak nature. He will be easily tempted to do evil things, but it is difficult for him to cultivate virtues. Only the Holy Mother has been predetermined to receive the grace of the Lord. She was immune from original sin, and she has already carried great virtues at the moment of her conception. Therefore, both her body and soul were much purer than the saints. This is actually the reason that she could easily cultivate all kinds of virtues in her life. If the Lord has bestowed grace to her to be the [Holy] Mother, would He allow the tiniest stain in her? All saints from past to present have shared the same views that the Holy Mother was as bright as sunlight and as pure as jade, and that it was absolutely impossible for her to be tainted by original sin.[66]

Vagnone's rhetorical reasoning leads to an impression that the Immaculate Conception has been an unanimously agreed concept. However, this argument may arouse some doubt if one looks into the historical development of the dogma in the Catholic Church. The authorities and theologians actually had very different and even conflicting views on the "immaculate" conception of Mary. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), for example, criticized a feast of the conception of Mary which in his eyes has gone beyond reason and tradition. He took the opportunity to repudiate the idea of being "immaculate" or sinless. He tended to regard it as a superstition, though he still believed that Mary has been sanctified in her mother's womb by God and that she has never committed a sin throughout her whole life.[67] This authoritative view influenced the later theologians, including St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), who likewise cast doubts at the Immaculate Conception due to its conflict with the belief of universal redemption through Jesus Christ. In his interpretation on this Marian dogma, Vagnone apparently omits the once heated disputes in medieval theology. He therefore can claim that the concept has been a Catholic doctrine agreed by all Christians from past to present. In other words, he rather makes a subjective and selective argument, not a factual and faithful one, in the Chinese context.

Mary's perpetual virginity, another established dogma in medieval Europe, was also among the fundamental Marian doctrines introduced by the Jesuits in their Chinese works. In *Xinbian Xizhuguo Tianzhu shilu*, Ruggieri makes an argument for Mary's virgin birth of Jesus

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[65] Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 77-78.
[66] Vagnone, *Shengmu xingshi*, in *WXSB*, vol. 3, 1287-1288.
[67] Graef, *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, 47-48.

in response to a question on Jesus' parents,

> Though Resuo 嚁哶 [i.e., Jesus] has been incarnated at birth, there is actually no sexual intercourse involved. Why there is no sexual intercourse? If the Lord of Heaven has magnificent power to be incarnated in the womb of a woman, thus sexual intercourse is unnecessary. The Lord of Heaven once selected a virgin of true purity, whose name was Maliya 媽利呀 [i.e., Mary]. He gave her a blow of *Qi* 氣 [i.e., vital energy] by which she got pregnant. After nine months, she gave birth to Resuo. Maliya remained her virginity, the same as that of a girl who knew nothing of sex. Resuo was born to this world, yet he was the one who only had a mother but not a father.[68]

This explanation on how Mary got pregnant comes from the biblical narrative of annunciation (Luke 1: 35). For the concept of the Holy Spirit, Ruggieri uses a special Chinese term *Qi*, which refers to an invisible vital energy in constant flow in a human body and the universe.[70] Though *Qi* and the Holy Spirit have certain similar meanings on both materialistic and metaphysical levels, the two concepts are rooted in very different religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions. The use of *Qi* is a conscious adaption to traditional Chinese thought in Ruggieri's attempt to define the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity and her virgin birth of Jesus. Nonetheless, since the use of *Qi* was too broad in Chinese thought, the Jesuits soon abandoned it and turned to another clearly defined new term *Shengshen* 聖神. This term and two other terms *Shengfu* 聖父 and *Shengzi* 聖子 later became a standard translation for the Catholic concept of Trinity.

In another place in his work, Ruggieri brings forth a metaphor to explain his point on Mary's virgin birth of Jesus, "One should believe the virgin got pregnant and gave birth to Resuo after nine months. Right before the moment of laboring, she was not contaminated by a tiny detriment, and she remained her virgin body that was no different from an unmarried maid. How can we prove it? The birth may be compared to the sun shining its light into a glass bottle. The light is inside already, yet the bottle remains unbroken."[71] The "sun beam through the glass" was one of the popular metaphors in medieval Europe, taught by Catholic clergy in support of the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity.[72] But to a late Ming Chinese reader who has never seen any Western glass object before, Ruggieri's argument may sound awkward and confusing. If a metaphor of this type is beyond Chinese daily experience, it would be difficult from them to understand the mystery of Mary's perpetual virginity.

In addition to virginity, the Jesuits have also tried different ways to align other virtues of Mary with the Confucian ideal of womanhood. In *Shengmu xingshi*, Vagnone depicts Mary as a fair maiden at her young age, whose personality and behavior perfectly embody *side* 四德,

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[68] Ruggieri, *Xinbian Xizhuguo Tianzhu shilu*, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 59.
[70] For an analysis of the discussions on *Qi* between the Jesuits and the Confucian scholars, see Song Gang 宋剛, *Giulio Aleni, Kouduo richao, and Christian-Confucian Dialogism in Late Ming Fujian*, Chapter 3.2.3.
[71] Ruggieri, *Xinbian Xizhuguo Tianzhu shilu*, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 63.
[72] Andrew Breeze, "The Blessed Virgin and the Sunbeam through Glass," *Celtica*, 23 (1999): 19-29

or the four womanly virtues, an influential Confucian concept that has been promoted as early as in the 2nd-century work *Nu Jie* 女誡 (Admonitions for Women). Mary's purity, humility, and sincerity can be tied with *fude* 婦德 (Proper Morality). She was mindful of her speech, without arrogance, and saying no slander, which can be tied with *fuyan* 婦言 (Proper Speech). She dressed herself in plain clothes and kept a mild, delicate appearance at all time, which can be tied with *furong* 婦容 (Proper Manner). Lastly, Mary's care about people in suffering and sickness, as well as her constant needlework, can be tied with *fugong* 婦功 (Proper Work).[73] It is interesting to note that Vaganone further adds some non-biblical episodes into Mary's life story to suggest a link with typical Confucian moral concerns: Her parents died when she was 11 years old. She spent all her savings to arrange a funeral and bury them. Then she decided to remain chaste and made a vow to abstain from three temptations—wealth, sexuality, and fame. When the priest and her relatives planned to arrange a marriage for her to continue the lineage of her family, Mary refused with the excuse that she would remain chaste according to her parents' will.[74] These episodes reveal Vagnone's intention to highlight Mary's fulfillment of filial piety, one of the most exalted virtues in Confucianism. In this case, an all-inclusive image of Mary is represented to meet both the Christian standard for the Mother of God and the Confucian expectation for ideal womanhood.

In their catechetical and exegetical writings, the Jesuits also frequently discuss about the doctrine of Mary's role as the mediatrix between God and man. Depending on the different Chinese audience, they provide either simple or elaborate explanations on this doctrine. In his *Tianzhu Shengjiao qimeng* 天主聖教啟蒙 (Rudiments on the Sacred Teaching of the Lord of Heaven, c. 1619), da Rocha interprets it in a simple catechetical form,

> **Master:** When a man is in suffering, he often calls upon the "Mother of Mercy" or the "Mother of Condolence." How come there are so many names for the Holy Mother?
> **Student:** The Lord of Heaven sees the Holy Mother of great importance, because she can plead to Him on behalf of man. Many people received by her the wonderful grace [of the Lord]. Therefore, we have many names to praise the Holy Mother.
> ……
> **Master:** What do you pray to the Holy Mother? Do you pray to her to forgive your sins?
> **Student:** No, I do not pray to her to forgive my sins.
> **Master:** Do you pray to her to bestow you grace and blessing?
> **Student:** Neither.
> **Master:** To whom do you pray to forgive your sins?
> **Student:** To the Lord of Heaven.
> **Master:** To whom do you pray to bestow you grace and blessing?
> **Student:** To the Lord of Heaven.
> **Master:** What do you pray to the Holy Mother, then?

[73] Vagnone, *Shengmu xingshi*, *WXSB*, vol. 3, 1290-1292.
[74] Ibid, 1292-1293.

> **Student:** I pray to her so that she will plead to the Lord of Heaven on my behalf, and the Lord will bestow me unfathomable grace.[75]

In this master-student conversation, da Rocha makes it clear that Mary is entrusted by God with her mediation. The interpretation follows the influential views of medieval theologians, for example, St. Bernard's proposition "God willed us to have everything through Mary."[76] However, da Rocha also stresses that Mary's role should not be exaggerated, because the Lord of Heaven is the only one who can forgive sins of man. Confined by its simple form, the catechism gives no further explanation. It presents the doctrine as if it is a self-explanatory truth that must be accepted by the neophytes.

In his exegetical work *Shengmu jingjie* 聖母經解 (Annotations of *Ave Maria*, 1632) Giacomo Rho (1593-1638) offers some detailed analysis on Mary's mediatrix role. He argues that a man dares not to pray directly to God and Christ, but he would be willing to approach to Mary and plead for her intercession in hope for God's forgiveness and grace,

> The Lord of Heaven is the supreme one with no match, while human beings are very humble. As to the grace to redeem the sins, how dare they come forward and pray to the Lord? There must be a mediator to channel their emotions. … Our Lord Jesus has been born as a man. Though he is the first and foremost mediator of man, the sinners still dare not to come forward to him, simply because he is by his original nature the Lord of Heaven. Except for the Holy Mother, who else can the people turn to? The Holy Mother is a human who has become the mother of Lord. When she learns the suffering of her fellows, she should have sympathy in her heart and would certainly convey their needs to her son. Whatever the Holy Mother prays, Jesus must accept it. Likewise, Jesus as the mediator of man prays to the Father, and man can certainly obtain forgiveness from the Father.[77]

According to Rho's reasoning, if what the Holy Mother requests on behalf of a man is in accordance with the Lord's will, there is no way her son Jesus would disobey her request for any reason. Though Rho shows no intention to deviate from the orthodoxy of God's forgiving power, there is a subtle implication in his argument: Mary is capable of accomplishing some mediation work that cannot be easily done in the God-man relation. In other words, since she holds the privileged position as the mother of Jesus, she can in a way facilitate and influence God's use of forgiving power. While this view still agrees with the theological stance of the Church, it sounds particularly meaningful to the prevailing Confucian concerns about filial piety and the father/mother-son relationships in Chinese society.

Being a model of all virtues and the mediatrix between God and man, Mary was further promoted by the Jesuits to be the Queen Mother of all creatures between heaven and earth. In

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[75] Da Rocha, *Tianzhu Shengjiao qimeng*, in *CCT ARSI*, vol. 1, 406-409.
[76] Graef, *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, 44.
[77] Rho, *Shengmu jingjie*, in Nicolas Standaert, Adrian Dudink, and Nathalie Monnet, eds., *Faguo Guojia tushuguan Ming-Qing Tianzhujiao wenxian* 法國國家圖書館明清天主教文獻 (Chinese Christian Texts from the National Library of France, hereafter as *CCT BnF*) (Taipei: Ricci Institute, 2009), vol. 21, 289-290.

his *Shengmujing jie*, Rho particularly explains on this honorific title,

> Maliya is the phonetic spelling [of the name Maria] in the countries of Judea and Syria. When translated [into Chinese], it refers to Muhuang 母皇 [literally Mother Emperor], or the star of the sea. The name also means the sea of bitterness, or the one receiving light, or the one giving light, or the one in a high position, or a teacher. The reason for these different meanings in one name is to show the supremacy and subtlety of the Holy Mother. As the name has been chosen by the Lord of Heaven for His mother, it must be in accordance with the reality [of her status].
>
> What does the title Muhuang mean? It means the Holy Mother is the mother of our Lord Jesus, namely, the incarnated Lord and the Lord of ten thousand things between heaven and earth. If the Son is the Lord, most honorable and incomparable, His mother shall be given the most honorable status of motherhood. This is why she is called Muhuang. She is … Muhuang of all angels, … Muhuang of all great ancestors, … Muhuang of all prophets, … Muhuang all apostles, … Muhuang of all martyrs, … Muhuang of all friars, … Muhuang of all virgins, … and Muhuang of all saints.[78]

Rho uses a special term Muhuang to refer to Mary as the Queen Mother. Though both "mu (mother)" and "huang (emperor)" were common titles in late imperial China, the compound word Muhuang has been rarely used in official documents and religious texts during the 17th century. When the Chinese people addressed to women of a royal status, they normally used titles such as Huanghou 皇后 (Empress), Muhou 母后 (Mother-Empress), and Huangmu 皇母 (Mother of Emperor). All these titles unambiguously indicated a feminine identity. Rho's translation therefore implies a mismatch between the Queen Mother and Muhuang in gender, unless the latter may be literally understood as a female "emperor" rather than a queen or an empress.

On the other hand, it is difficult to find in Catholic theology a proper equivalent word to the Chinese term Muhuang. Rho suggests that the word Mary may be originated from the languages of Judea and Syria, yet it is a fact that neither the Hebrew name Miryam (or Miriam) nor the Syriac name Maryam has ever carried a meaning that could be matched with the title of Mother-Emperor. Just like "the star of the sea" (or *stella maris*) was a Latin derivative first used by St. Jerome (347-420), the more prestigious title of Mary as the Queen Mother could have been a medieval amalgamation of several titles, e.g., *Mater Dei* (Mother of God) and *Regina Cœli* (Queen of Heaven).[79] None of them can be directly projected onto the Chinse term Muhuang in structure and meaning. Despite Rho's explanation on the origin of the name Mary, Muhuang does not seem to be a simple translation of any prevalent title of Mary in the Catholic tradition.

By adopting such a special term, Rho may intend to develop a new all-inclusive Chinese title for Mary. The term in a way falls out of existing Chinese terminology, yet it can present

[78] Ibid., 301-308.
[79] Graef, *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, 40-42; Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 115-116;

to a full extent her extraordinary status, power, moral attributes. Rho's thoughtful treatment may be seen as a further step of the Jesuits' adaptation to Chinese thought. The term Muhuang revealed their attempt to fuse the Catholic vision of a hierarchical universe and the Chinese vision of an imperial order, and it turned out to be a vivid example for the syncretic formation of early Chinese Mariology in the 17th century.

4. Mary in Devotional Activities

It is a known fact that the Marian cult flourished throughout the whole of Christendom in the late Middle Ages. Not only did the holy images of Mary (e.g., Madonna of St. Luke) attract massive devotion, but Marian shrines and sanctuaries also became popular pilgrimage sites. The major Catholic orders, including the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Jesuits, endeavoured to develop organized forms of Marian devotion—sodalities, congregations, and confraternities–by which they helped the laymen to pray to Mary, defend the key Marian dogmas, and undertake other activities in missionary work, charity, and education.[80]

Marian sodalities and congregations have also been established along with the spread of Catholic missions worldwide. Upon the arrival of the Jesuits and other missionaries in late Ming China, the organization of a Marian sodality or a confraternity, normally called *hui* 會 in Chinese, became an important part of their missionary work and the founding of Chinese Christian communities. Under the support and guidance of Ricci, the first Marian sodality was founded in Beijing in 1609 by a scholar official called Luke by his Christian name. Luke was once a Buddhist layman and had concubines in his house, but he later abandoned all these and converted to the Christian religion. According to a biography of the elite convert Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562-1633), the association was named as *Shengmu lingbao hui* 聖母領報會, or the Sodality of Mary's Annunciation, based on the model of the Jesuits' archsodality in Rome.[81] Within decades, more sodalities and congregations dedicated to Mary were established in Shanghai, Nanjing, Shanxi, Fujian, and other places. The number reached around 400 by 1664, with about a hundred members in each sodality or congregation.[82] These fast-growing Marian sodalities not only testified the consolidated efforts of the missionaries and Chinese converts in spreading Marian devotions, but they also formed part of the flourishing Catholic missions in 17th-century China.

The major devotional activities in the Marian sodalities were similar to those in other lay organizations affiliated with the Church. The sodalities under the Jesuits' supervision, for example, included regular practices in reciting Marian prayers and participating in various

[80] Miri Rubin, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 4: Christianity in Western Europe, c.1100–c.1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 336-339.
[81] See *Xu Wending gong shishi* 徐文定公事實 (Biography of Mr. Xu Wending), in Nicolas Standaert, Adrian Dudink, Wang Renfang, eds., *Xujiahui cangshulou Ming-Qing Tianzhujiao wenxian* 徐家匯藏書樓明清天主教文獻續編 (Sequel to Chinese Christian Texts from the Zikawei Library) (Taipei: Fanji chubanshe, 2013), vol. 16, 607-608.
[82] Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History*, 41.

charity works. The Jesuits paid special attention to moral cultivation and family well-being of members in connection with those widely circulated Marian images, prayers, catechisms, as well as exegetical works. The model of Mary in their visual and textual representations was reinforced and turned into one necessary shared bond of personal spiritual experiences and public communal worships among the Chinese converts.

In the statutes for the Sodality of Mary's Annunciation founded in 1694 in Beijing, the objective for this lay organization is clearly stated it its introduction,

> The sacred virtues of the Holy Mother have made her a model of ten thousand virtues. She has the great power to be an aid and supporter of man before the Lord [of Heaven]. Whoever is devoted to moral cultivation must rely upon the Holy Mother, so that he can be rescued from a wrong path. The founding of this Sodality aims to promote more frequent [good] conducts and [charity] works. The members shall not only love the Lord but also love man in hope for keeping a close bond all the time [with the Lord and the Holy Mother]. Those who want to join the Sodality shall follow these rules, cherishing the sacred virtues [of Mary] and following her as the model. We should pray to the Holy Mother as our blessed patron, who can then pray to the Lord of Heaven on our behalf. The Lord will bestow His divine grace and protection for our good works, so that we can attain the eternal happiness.[83]

This statement of objective is obviously based on the aforementioned Jesuits' Marian texts, in which she has been represented as the perfect model of morality and the powerful mediatrix between God and man. To achieve the objective, the first statute of the Sodality requires that "[Members] shall always learn by heart the accounts on Mary's sacred virtues in her life, remain chastity and keep away from lust, have no wicked thought in mind, and say no heresy in mouth. They shall be careful about the gossips. Only then can they receive more sacred love [of the Holy Mother] than people of other congregations."[84] The requirements in this statute are clearly articulated in both religious and secular terms, hence a blending of Catholic spiritual devotion and Confucian moral perfection.

In fact, China had a longstanding tradition of religious and secular associations, such as *fangsheng hui* 放生會 (society for releasing life) for Buddhist laymen and *tongshan hui* 同善會 (benevolent associations) for Confucian gentry, which served multiple purposes of mutual aid, charity, and moral education. One may argue that the Christian lay organizations founded by the missionaries and Chinese converts largely reinforced the traditional pattern in late imperial China.[85] However, with a close look at their entry requirements, administrative

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[83] *Shengmu lingbao huigui* 聖母領報會規 (Statutes for the Sodality of Mary's Annunciation), in *CCT BnF*, vol. 20, 229.
[84] Ibid., 230.
[85] Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume One, 635-1800*, 457.

structure, and patterns of communal worship, it seems more reasonable to speculate that the new Marian sodalities and other lay congregations adopted a syncretic approach to integrate the key features of the European Marian cult and the major functions of native Chinese associations.[86] Marian devotion was therefore actualized in these sodalities featuring a set of boundary-crossing objectives, rules, and activities.

IV. Multilayered Chinese Responses and Reinterpretations of Mary

While the Jesuits continued to advocate Marian images, texts, and devotional activities, the Chinese people responded with their multilayered understandings and reinterpretations of this prominent Christian icon. Their responses may be divided into three general categories. The first category consists of the comments and interpretations created by Chinese scholars, officials, and commoners who held a sympathetic or a neutral view on Mary. The second category includes the eulogistic expressions and apologetic arguments presented by Chinese converts, especially those from the elite class. The third category covers a number of negative views, suspicions, and criticisms from the conservative scholars and anti-Christian figures. Each category may be further divided into certain sub-categories, and there are also some Chinese views shifting between different categories. One can see a subtle self-other paradox embedded in these manifold representations that often crossed the boundaries of Chinese and Catholic traditions. Whether for exotic curiosity, ideological distinction, moral judgement, or spiritual devotion, they more or less embodied a complex mixture of real experience and imaginary conceptualization of the Chinese people in their remodeling of Mary through the 17th century.

1. Between Exotic Curiosity and Sinocentric Contempt

The early Jesuits in China recorded many occasions on the visits of the Chinese people to their houses and the churches. They wanted to look at the marvellous statues, paintings, and print illustrations of the Lord of Heaven as well as the Holy Mother. Indeed, there was always a taste of exoticism when gazing at these fantastic curios from a remote foreign culture. The Ming Dynasty has been regarded as "an early modern period" not in terms of production, but in terms of consumption, with an increasing demand for luxury, antique, and exotic objects in Chinese daily life.[90] As shown in the works of late Ming literati, including Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1585-1645) and Tu Long 屠龍 (1542-1605), the superfluous things not only stood for

[86] Han Siyi 韩思艺, "*Mingmo Qingchu Ye-Ru cishan sixiang he shijian de huitong yu zhuanhua* 明末清初耶儒慈善思想和实践的会通与转化 (Convergence and Transformation on Charity Thoughts and Practices between Catholicism and Confucianism during Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties)," *Jinan xuebao* 暨南学报 (*Jinan Journal*), No. 9 (2013): 58-65.

[90] Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 4.

one's social status, knowledge, and taste, but they also became part of a cultural consumption by way of visual amusement.[91]

It is not surprising that such a trend caught the attention of the early Jesuits in China. Among them, Ricci keenly noticed Chinese passion for all kinds of antiques,

> The Chinese have a great liking for antiques, though they have no very ancient statues. Tripods made of bell-metal bronze are considered to be precious because of their rusty iron color, which makes them look very old, and they like vases made of Cretan chalk and of the particular kind of marble which we have referred to as jasper. Pictures done by well-known artists are in great demand, despite the fact that Chinese pictures are only outlines, done in black rather than in varied colors. Character-writing manuscripts of prominent writers, generally written on paper or on cloth, are also sought for, but they must be protected against fraud by bearing the autograph of the author. Counterfeiters of antiques are numerous, and they are clever at cheating the unwary by selling them utterly worthless things, taking advantage of the fact that they are poorly posted in values.[92]

The concept of antiqueness may at times be tied with the Confucian idea of orthodoxy, with a didactic purpose to recover humanity and rightness of the ancient sage kings. To most late Ming connoisseurs, the primary interest rather lay in the artistic and commercial values of an antique, while any indication of Confucian orthodoxy could merely be a secondary concern.

It was in this favorable context that the early Jesuits brought to China a variety of objects, including clavichords, prisms, clocks, sundials, as well as images and emblems for religious use. According to Ricci's descriptions, these fantastic European objects never failed to arouse great curiosity of the Chinese audience. In a sense, they have been consumed as a new fashion in late Ming Chinese society, from the royal family in the imperial court to the commoners in a small county.

Among the Christian objects, the images of Madonna and Child were often mentioned by late Ming literati in their writings. They first noticed the particular style and visual effect of European arts as compared to Chinese arts. Gu Qiyuan 顧起元 (1565-1628), for example, wrote about Ricci's print illustration of Madonna and Child, "The Heavenly Lord is presented in picture as a little child carried in the arms of a woman called the Heavenly Mother. The picture is painted in five colors on a copper plate. The features are lifelike; the bodies, arms and hands seem to protrude tangibly from the picture. The concavities and convexities of the face are visually no different from a living person."[93] Though he had no prior knowledge of

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[91] In his work, Wen often compares antique, elegant and delightful objects with recent, vulgar and disgusting objects, with the former representing the taste of true gentlemen while the latter representing the taste of rich but ignorant people. See Wen Zhengming, *Changwu zhi* 長物志 (Superfluous Things) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1966), prologue.

[92] Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 79-80.

[93] Gu Qiyuan, *Kezuo zhuiyu* 客座贅語 (Superfluous Talks in the Parlor, 1617), in *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成, ser. 100, vol. 6, 18b-19a. Here I use Lin Li-chiang's translation. See Lin Li-chiang 林麗江, "The Proliferation of Images: The Ink-stick Designs and the Printing of the *Fang-shih Mo-p'u* and the *Ch'eng-shih Mo-yuan*" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1998), 222-223.

European art works, Gu could still grasp the essential characteristics of such an illustration, especially its lifelike feature.

Wu Li 吳歷 (1632-1718), a well-known artist who became an ordained Catholic priest in the early Qing period, made his professional remarks on the differences between Chinese and European paintings, "Our paintings do not seek physical likeness, and does not depend on stereotyped patterns, thus the so-called subtle and detached style. Their paintings entirely focus on [techniques of] *yin-yang* and front and back, and take much effort on fixed patterns of physical likeness."[94] Wu used some terms in Chinese paintings to make a stylistic and technical comparison between the two different artistic traditions. He likewise stressed the "physical likeness" as the key feature of European paintings.

Nonetheless, Ming and Qing literati were largely unimpressed with European arts. They tended to see them as some art works far below the Chinese artistic standards. Many of them showed contempt to the "spiritless" craftsman style of European arts. Zou Yigui 鄒一桂 (1686-1772) explicitly made remarks in this respect,

> In their paintings all the figures, buildings, and trees cast shadows, and their brush and colours are entirely different from those of Chinese painters. Their views (scenery) stretch out from broad (in the foreground) to narrow (in the background) and are defined (mathematically measured). When they paint houses on a wall people are tempted to walk into them. Students of painting may well take over one or two points from them to make their own paintings more attractive to the eye. But these painters have no brush-manner whatsoever; although they have skill, they are simply artisans [*chiang*] and cannot consequently be classified as painters.[95]

In Zou's mind, European paintings were the trivial works of artisans who lack the profound spirit of a true literati artist. He would still acknowledge its realistic style, but it looked more like a kind of "cheating" technique to him. This biased judgement has been shared by Zou and many other Chinese artists of the time. Being keenly concerned about the *otherness* of the European artistic tradition, they would rather label it as an inferior type in comparison with the superior tradition in Chinese arts.[96]

2. Displaced Identities and Distorted Images

As discussed before, the early Jesuits were cautious at any Chinese confusion of Mary

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[94] Wu Li, *Mojing huaba* 墨井畫跋, in Zhang Wenqin 章文钦, anno., *Wu Yushan ji jianzhu* 吳漁山集箋注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 443.

[95] I use Michael Sullivan's translation of Zou's comments. See Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 80.

[96] Gauvin A. Bailey, *Arts on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 82-105; David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800* (3rd ed.) (Manham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2009), 70-77.

with the deities of native religions and folk beliefs. Their worry was not unfounded, because there were indeed many examples of misinterpreted representations of Mary in contemporary Chinese works. In *Dongyi tuxiang* 東夷圖像 (Illustrations of Eastern Barbarians, 1586), Cai Ruxian 蔡汝賢 draws a picture of a European man. Strangely, this "barbarian" figure is said to come from *Tianzhu* 天竺, a name that has been traditionally used for the country of India. (Fig. 5) Cai explains in the description that the country has been known to the Chinese people long time ago. It is located in the southwest sea, far away from China. People in this country worship the Buddha, and they are vegetarians and do not kill animals. Cai also describes that the people of *Tianzhu* perform worship rituals every seven days. They pray before they start to eat, and they pray again after a meal. As one can easily recognize, the first part on the Buddha and the no-killing rule is linked with the Buddhist teachings, yet the second part on the time of worship and the praying at a meal should refer to the Catholic practices. As to the picture, it carries some obvious Christian features. The man who kneels before an altar has thick beard and a shaved crown of his head. He holds a set of prayer beads in the left hand, and he wears a garment with a ruffled collar and a rope belt around the waist, half of it hanging down. His barefoot are shown at the lower end of the garment. The unusual look and dress style suggest that he is most likely a Franciscan friar from Europe, not a Buddhist monk from India.

It is interesting to note that a woman holding a boy in her arms is depicted in the painting above the altar. Since Cai does not give a clear explanation on the painting, one may wonder who the woman could be. If one follows the name *Tianzhu* (i.e., India) specified in the picture, the woman may be understood as child-giving Guanyin bodhisattva. But if one identifies the man in the picture as a Franciscan monk, the woman should be Mary in the typical Catholic motif of Madonna and Child. In this case, Cai must have confused Buddhist India with Christian Europe by location, religion, and appearance of the people. The displaced identity looks more like an unintentional misunderstanding. However, Cai does not seem to care much about the true identities of the man kneeling before the altar and the woman in the painting. As far as the term of *yi* 夷 (i.e., barbarian) can be applied to these people and the description can be tied with a Sinocentric world order, this paradoxical representation would still make sense to him.

Another kind of displaced identity of Mary can be seen in an early Qing work *Lidai shenxian tongjian* 歷代神仙通鑑 (Comprehensive Accounts on the Immortals through the Dynasties, 1700). The compilers Xu Dao 徐道 and Cheng Yuqi 程毓奇 may have used some Chinese Catholic texts on Jesus and Mary as references. In the rewritten account of their life story, Mary is said to be a virgin who gave birth to Jesus, the incarnated Lord of Heaven. Out of great joy, the mother clothed her child with a garment and put him in a manger. It turns out that Mary raised Jesus by herself. Jesus at his young age was filial and obedient to his mother, and he took care of her till he was thirty years old. Jesus resurrected after the crucifixion. He would first see his mother to relieve her from worry. Later, the Holy Spirit came down to the

earth and accompanied Mary to ascend to Heaven. Rising above the angels of nine ranks, she was given the honorific titles of "the Queen Mother of heaven and earth" and "the patron of all peoples in the world."[100] This biographical account obviously misreads and omits many detailed parts in the original gospel narrative, yet it indicates the intention of the compilers to highlight Mary's motherly love to Jesus and Jesus' filial love to Mary. As a result, these two Christian figures have been reinterpreted as the model of an ideal parent-child relationship in Confucian moral terms. The compilers also borrow the term Muhuang from contemporary Catholic texts, likely including Rho's *Shengmu jingjie*, to highlight Mary's role as the Queen Mother. In this case, Mary is depicted as an extraordinary figure who earned her supreme title primarily due to her exemplary motherhood.

Meanwhile, Mary in the same story is identified as a Daoist figure. She appears in the section titled *Xian-Zhen yanpai* 仙真衍派 (lineages and schools of the immortals), in which the compilers collect a variety of deities, immortals, and legendary figures known in Daoism and folk religions. A distorted image of Mary emerges from such a process of inter-religious remodeling. The compilers further provide an illustration to show the physical look of Mary. (Fig. 9) She is situated at a place surrounded by mountains, trees, and clouds, all being typical motifs for the representation of Daoist hermits and immortals. Wearing a plain gown like an ordinary Chinese lady, she turns her back to the audience. There is a girl standing in front of her, and they two seem to have a conversation. Their names are specified at the top of the page: Maliya 瑪利亞 for Mary, and Xihe shaonü 西河少女 (Girl of Xihe) for the girl.

Xihe shaonü, allegedly a Daoist immortal during the Han Dynasty, was first recorded in *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of the Immortals) by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343).[101] Though she was already more than two hundred years old, she still looked like a young girl due to some magic elixir that she took. She later left for Mount Hua 華 and became an immortal. Despite the fact that Xihe shaonü also had a son, she did not show any other special character similar to Mary. It is therefore unusual to see them being depicted side by side with each other in the same illustration. The representation of an imaginary encounter between a Christian figure and a Daoist immortal delivers an unspoken message to the Chinese readers: Being identified – or reinterpreted – as the Queen Mother who has ascended to Heaven, Mary now becomes one of the Daoist immortals in the Chinese supernatural world.

Mary was not only misinterpreted by some Chinese people in Buddhist and Daoist terms, but her image was also linked with the goddess tradition in Chinese folk beliefs. In *Wu Zazu* 五雜俎 (Five Assorted Offerings, 1616), Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567-1624) writes that,

> A man named Li Madou [i.e., Matteo Ricci] came from the country of Tianzhu 天主. He passed by the country of the Buddha and headed eastward. It took him four years to

[100] Xu Dao and Cheng Yuqi, *Lidai shenxian tongjian* (Buyue lou edition, 1700), folios 5a-5b.
[101] Ge Hong, *Shenxian zhuan* (Beijing: Xueyuan chuban she, 1998), 72.

> arrive at the border of Guangdong. He has the Christian belief and venerates the Lord of Heaven. It is similar to [the veneration of] Confucius among the Confucians and [the veneration of] Sakyamuni among the Buddhists. … Ricci's picture of the Lord of Heaven shows a female figure, with a strange shape, like what people in ancient times called the one with a human head and a dragon body.[102]

Xie must have seen a picture of Madonna and Child presented by Ricci, but for some reason he misidentifies Mary as the Lord of Heaven. His confusion proves the rumor Ricci and his fellows have once heard, saying that the missionaries worshipped a woman as their God. In his account, Xie makes an interesting analogy between Mary and Nüwa 女媧, the legendary mother goddess who created human beings according to ancient Chinese myths. In fact, there is a problem in Xie's expression of "the one with a human head and a dragon body," because Nüwa has been mostly depicted as a goddess with a human head and a snake body in Chinese records and art works. [103] Despite this vague reference to Nüwa as a Chinese counterpart, Xie intends to make another layer of reinterpretation of Mary's identity. The Nüwa-Mary analogy definitely sounds an awkward distortion from a Catholic viewpoint. However, it may still be reasonable in the eyes of Xie and some Chinese people. They would pay respect to various gods and goddesses in the supernatural world, regardless of their native or foreign origins. If Mary could be equated with Guanyin in Buddhism and Xihe shaonü in Daoism, there should no problem to compare her to Nüwa or any other goddess in Chinese folk beliefs.

One can see a mixture of observations, imaginations, and reinterpretations in the above Chinese representations of Mary. Whether they were aware of a self-other paradox in their (mis)understandings, the Chinese writers would try their own ways to make sense of this prominent religious figure introduced by the missionaries from the West. It is not surprising to see that Mary went through a process of displacement and distortion in their representations. She has been transformed into a deified figure comparable to a bodhisattva, an immortal, or a mother goddess in native Chinese religious beliefs.

3. Propagation of Christian-Confucian Syncretism

The early Jesuits in China, including Ricci, Vagnone, and Aleni, advocated a strategic adaptation to the Confucian teachings in their missionary work. Through intensive intellectual exchanges and voluminous publications on the Western Learning, they won the first group of elite Chinese converts. Though the number of this group only took a small portion in the late Ming Christian population, they played a key role by using their official positions and social contacts to advocate the Christian faith and help introduce the Jesuits' Learning from Heaven. Some of them, including Xu Guangqi and Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠 (1557-1626), were praised to

[102] Xie Zhaozhe, *Wu Zazu* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2001), 98.
[103] Dai Guoqing, "Ming-Qing zhiji Shengmu Maliya de Zhognguo xingxiang yanjiu," 87-89.

be the "pillars" of the newly founded Chinese Church and the examples for the success of the Jesuits' missionary strategy.[106] These elite converts also took the lead to promote Marian devotions in their apologetic and edifying works. Their zealous efforts were part of a rising Chinese Marian culture through the 17th century.

Yang Tingyun was a fervent advocate and defender of the Christian religion. In his apologetic work *Daiyi pian* 代疑篇 (In Case of Doubts, 1621), he explains on Mary's virgin birth of Jesus and her exemplary virtues. His sources mainly come from the Jesuits' works, but between the lines one can also see his own interpretations. He first clarifies that the Lord of Heaven was born to this world as a man, and the fact has been proved by the testimonials of many sages and worthies in the past. People always believe that Laozi was born from the left side of his mother and Sakyamuni was born from the right side of Queen Māyā. If they have no doubt about these absurd claims, Yang argues, how come they cannot accept the truth that Jesus was born in the womb of Mary, the virgin mother?[107] This is a subtle argument, because Yang not only shows his disbelief and scorn at the groundless claims in Daoism and Buddhism, but he also expresses a firm Christian stand on Mary's virgin birth of Jesus as the only truth. Yang also mentions about the "sun beam through the glass" metaphor, which has been used by Ruggieri in *Xinbian Xizhuguo Tianzhu shilu*, to explain how the orthodox belief of Mary's virgin birth of Jesus differs from the idolatrous ideas about the births of Laozi and Sakyamuni.

When challenged by a question that the image of Madonna and Child does not seem to be solemn enough, Yang takes this opportunity to argue that Mary actually deserves respect due to her extraordinary attributes,

> There are many sacred pictures from the West. … The image of Mary [holding Child Christ] in her arms originates from the first miracle of Christ's birth. There are several profound meanings: First, it is to show the virtues of the Holy Mother. Chastity is the first among many virtues, yet it is still not as good as the purity of a virgin. Since the Holy Mother made her vow of [virginity], no one can be a match to her in womanly virtues. … Second, it is to show the love of the Holy Mother. The truest emotion would be the love of a mother to her son. As a virtuous woman, Mary loved Jesus, the Holy Son. … Hence, Mary and Jesus are often depicted being together in Western paintings. This can inspire people to have more love and respect to the Lord of Heaven. … Third, it is to highlight the achievements of the Holy Mother. As there is a big difference between [the Lord of] Heaven and man, how can man directly say their prayers [to the Lord]? The Holy Mother has a human nature and a human body, so as a member of the same species she can pass the prayers on behalf of man. When a memorial written by a subject or a commoner is to be known by the emperor, it must be presented by a high official. Jesus loves the Holy Mother to such an extent that he would not reject any request from her. If one follows this approach, the Holy Mother will definitely pass the prayers [to the Lord]. Hence, a painting of this type is made particularly for such a reason. The goal is to teach

[106] Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume One, 635-1800*, 386-391, 404-415.
[107] Yang Tingyun, *Daiyi pian*, in Wu Xiangxiang 吳相湘, ed., *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian* 天主教東傳文獻 (Archives on Catholic Missions to the East, hereafter as *WX*) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1965/1997), 588.

people on how to pray in a proper way.[108]

In his explanation, Yang emphasizes on three key attributes—virginity, motherly love, and intercession—to justify Mary's important role in the Christian belief. Interestingly, all three attributes concur with the essential concepts in Confucianism. The virtue of virginity aims for individual perfection, while motherly love is a core Confucian value in family relationships. As to Mary's mediatrix role, it is intentionally aligned with the proper administration in a hierarchical order, so that the Lord of Heaven in the divine world can be paralleled with the Son of Heaven in the secular world. Yang's threefold explanation reveals an implicit purpose to adapt the Christian image of Mary to the ideal model of Confucian learning: *Xiushen* 修身 (cultivation of the self), *Qijia* 齊家 (regulation of the family), and *Zhiguo* 治國 (rule of a country). With his well-knit arguments, Yang would hope to achieve a harmony of Marian devotion and Confucian women education.

Xu Guangqi also regarded the Jesuits' Learning from Heaven as a complement of the Confucian orthodoxy, which has long been lost due to the deviant teachings of Buddhism and Daoism. In support of a Christian-Confucian synthesis, Xu took advantage of his attainments in literature to compose edifying poems on the essential Catholic doctrines. The following is a poem on the model image of Mary,

She is the honorable mother of the Creator,
yet she remains the purest body of a virgin.
Her life begins with the Immaculate Conception,
while inheriting the nature of full benevolence.
She always gives light to shine upon the world,
and takes up her duty to be the patron in saving the people.
The mirror of her rightness is set as the law for many,
then the heavenly gate opens for them to enter.
Her superior position rises above the angels,
and her pure virtues evidently surpass the sages.
She receives the utmost grace hard to be matched with,
and she has extraordinary incomparable beauty.[110]

The poem carries a classic and elegant style, obviously written for the Confucian literati. Moreover, by using such words as "full benevolence," "superior position," and "pure virtues," Xu highlights the doctrinal and moral orthodoxy of Mary, with an attempt to depict her image as a model in Confucian terms.

Some early Qing Confucian converts, including Wu Li and Zhang Xingyao 張星曜 (1633-ca. 1715), also contributed edifying poems on Mary. They followed the same approach of Christian-Confucian syncretism and praised Mary as an all-embracing model of virtues.

[108] Ibid., 590-592.
[110] Li Tiangang 李天綱 and Zhu Weizheng 朱維錚, eds., *Xu Guangqi quanji* 徐光啟全集 (Complete Works of Xu Guangqi) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011), vol. 9, 420.

Their refined literary representations marked a distinct character of the elite discourse that repeatedly underlined Mary's exemplary virtues of purity (Immaculate Conception), virginity (virgin birth of Christ), and benevolence (compassion and love) in connection with the Confucian concept of moralistic orthodoxy. In contrast, Chinese converts of the lower classes developed a different tendency in their devotions to Mary. They more frequently used a register of terms to affirm the great power and other divine attributes of Mary in miraculous healing and protection. These discourses marked the emergence of a class-based division among elite and commoners in the early development of Chinese Marian devotions.

3. Accusations and Defenses in Upholding Confucian Morality

Despite the Jesuits' endeavours and the propagation of Confucian converts, the Catholic missions in China were often met with oppositions. As one can find in the anti-Christian works of the early 17th century, those suspicious and xenophobic Chinese people targeted at both Jesus and Mary, two prominent icons in the Christian religion. Ironically, the leading adversaries also came from the elite class, namely, Confucian literati and officials, whom the Jesuits tried all means to befriend. In 1615, Shen Que 沈潅 (?-1624), then the Vice-Minister of the Board of Rites in Nanjing, launched the first anti-Christian campaign. He submitted three memorials to Emperor Wanli, in which he listed a series of "crimes" committed by the "deceitful barbarians" (i.e., the foreign missionaries). Shen further led the arrests of two dozen Jesuits and Chinese converts. The conservative scholar Yang Guangxian 楊光先 (1597-1669) led another anti-Christian incident in the early Qing period, which has been known as the Kangxi Calendar Case. He submitted memorials to Emperor Shunzhi 順治 (1638-1661), claiming that the Jesuits were subversive barbarians by nature and had a plot for rebellion against the imperial rule. The missionaries and Chinese converts were arrested and persecuted, till the newly thronged Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (1654-1722) reinstituted the imperial patronage due to a full victory of the Jesuit astronomers in the contest with the Chinese astronomers led by Yang Guangxian.[112] In these anti-Christian incidents, the conservative scholars tended to attack Christianity more in ideological and moralistic terms than in religious terms. To them, Christianity was nothing more than an evil religion promulgated by the barbarians, thereby a serious threat to Confucian orthodoxy and Chinese imperial hierarchy.

In an anti-Christian article titled *Quyi zhiyan* 驅夷直言 (Straight Words on Expelling the Barbarians, 1638), the author Huang Tingshi 黃廷師 gives a list of the major claims on the Lord of Heaven made by the "treacherous barbarians" such as Ricci and Aleni. Huang's arguments disclose his explicit opposition of the Christian belief. Jesus is not the Saviour of the world, but rather a sinful ghost. Huang further provides some accounts on how the foreign missionaries burn the bones of the dead to make oil and rape women converts in the church.

[112] Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume One, 635-1800*, 510-515; Jiang Wenhan 江文漢, *Ming-Qing jian zai Hua de Tianzhujiao Yesuhui shi* 明清間在華的天主教耶穌會士 (The Jesuits in Ming-Qing China) (Shanghai: Zhishi chubanshe, 1987), 31-34.

Not surprisingly, Mary becomes a target of Huang's defamatory descriptions. He refers to her with a strange transliterated name Xianjiaomaliye 仙礁麻里耶, despite the fact that her name Maliya has been commonly used by both converts and non-believers. Huang suggests that Mary has violated Confucian morality, because she got pregnant without a marriage and gave birth to a son called Liaoshi 寮氏 (i.e., Deus). Though Liaoshi was later killed for practicing sorcery and became a sinful ghost, he has been worshiped by the Xiyi 西夷, or barbarians of the West, who entered China recently and spread the evil foreign religion among the Chinese people.[113] Apparently, Huang makes a purposeful misspelling of the names of Jesus and Mary, so that their alien identity and suspicious acts may be easily tied with the barbarian character of Xiyi. Through such a distorted ideological representation, Huang reinforces the age-old idea of the Chinese-barbarian distinction and gives a serious warning about the threat of the deceitful Xiyi to the Ming Empire.

Similar expressions can also be found in the early Qing work *Bude yi* 不得已 (I Cannot Do Otherwise, 1665) by Yang Guangxian. With the fast growth of Catholic communities in the earlier decades, Yang and his followers could learn more relevant information about the Christian religion. They refuted all major Catholic doctrines, including those about Mary. In his work, Yang develops a critical view on Mary's virgin birth of Jesus,

> If the Lord of Heaven is Jesus, who holds him and puts him in Mary's womb? Even among the strange stories in Qixie 齊諧, one can hardly find any nonsense like this. The male-female sexual intercourse is the way all things are born, and it is also the general principle in the human world. If the son has both a father and a mother, he will not feel ashamed. But if there is only a mother but no father, the son will lose his dignity. … For a man with a mother but no father, I am afraid that he cannot even teach people in his own country. How can his fatherlessness be known to all nations under heaven! Only the beasts know a mother than a father in the world, is it true that believers of the [Christian] religion do not know their fathers? Otherwise, why would they worship this fatherless ghost and respect him so much? The way they regard a fatherless son as a sage indeed opens the opportunity for those women who do not have a husband.
>
> If Mary gave birth to Jesus, one cannot say that she has kept a virgin body. How come a virgin girl would delightfully accept the [serious] matter of pregnancy? Moreover, who could verify whether she kept a virgin body or not? In the *Book of Rites*, it is said that "words of the inner chamber shall not be passed out," and, "there should be no talking about women at the courtyard in front of the ancestral hall." These [statements] are to exhort a sense of shame. Even the beasts would not speak of the virgin body of a mother, how come this so-called sage would speak of it, and his disciples would announce it to all nations under heaven? The disciples of Jesus were therefore worse than the beasts! The two words "virgin body" must have been used as an excuse for fatherlessness. What they do not know is that whoever excuses himself accuses himself![114]

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[113] Xia Guiqi 夏瑰奇, ed., *Shengchao poxie ji* 聖朝破邪集 (Collection of Destroying the Evil Teachings in Our Great Dynasty, 1640) (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1996), 174-176. For a discussion on the name Xianjiaomaliye, see Dai Guoqing, "Ming-Qing zhiji Shengmu Maliya de Zhognguo xingxiang yanjiu," 113-116.

[114] Yang Guangxian, *Bude yi*, in Wu Xiangxiang, *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian xubian* 天主教東傳文獻續編

In his arguments, Yang applies a threefold reasoning to refute the Catholic doctrine of Mary's virgin birth of Jesus. First, the doctrine is against the normal way of human reproduction, as it says that Mary never had any sexual intercourse with a man, and yet she still gave birth to a boy. Second, the doctrine violates the Confucian norms on family morality. Fatherlessness means the absence of the husband-wife relationship and the parent-child relationship, two of the five human relationships that have been taught by leading Confucian thinkers for centuries. Third, since Mary was involved in this Christian "scam" of virgin birth, she should not be qualified for the Confucian model of womanhood. Allegedly for the purpose to reclaim the tradition of Confucian orthodoxy, Yang specifies these reasons to prove the evil nature of the Christian religion and deny the model image of Mary. The idea of the Chinese-barbarian distinction is again visible in his arguments. Though he and his supporters were met with a total failure in the astronomical contests with the Jesuits, Yang's ideology-oriented refutations served as a major reference for contemporary and later anti-Christian scholars.

In face of the harmful accusations of Yang and other anti-Christian leaders, the Jesuits and Chinese converts published apologetic works to defend their Christian faith. Lodovico Buglio (1606-1682), for example, argues in his *Budeyi bian* 不得已辯 (A Critique of *Budeyi*, 1665) that the Lord of Heaven would rather become an incarnated man, so as to show a unique model in the human world. As there have been many extraordinary births of saints (or sages) since the ancient times, the omnipotent Lord certainly could realize Mary's virgin birth of Jesus without following the normal way of human reproduction. The primary reason for selecting Mary was because she could serve as an unmatched model of virtues and be free from any contamination of original sin. Buglio then gives more explanations to reaffirm the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the purity and beauty of Mary's body, and her supreme position as Muhuang (i.e., Queen Mother). He also uses the metaphor of "sun beam through the glass" to explain Mary's perpetual virginity.[117] In his apologetic arguments, Buglio firmly upholds the fundamental belief of God's omnipotence, yet he meanwhile re-connects Mary's attributes with the Confucian ideal of womanhood.

Early Qing Chinese converts have also been involved in the defense of Mariological doctrines. It is interesting to note that, though they adopted a similar approach to what Buglio and other missionaries have argued in their apologetic writings, they developed some new interpretations of their own. In *Chongzheng bibian* 崇正必辯 (Necessary Defense to Uphold the Orthodox Teaching, 1672), He Shizhen 何世貞 quotes Yang Guangxian's accusations of Mary's perpetual virginity and then makes his rebuttal point by point. Like Buglio, he refers to humility and purity as the exemplary virtues of Mary. The metaphors that he employs for comparison, however, seem to be more adaptive to a Chinese way of understanding. Mary's

(Second Series of Documents on Catholic Missions to the East) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1966/2000), vol. 3, 1109-1111.

[117] Buglio, *Budeyi bian*, in *WX*, 260-264.

virgin birth of Jesus is "comparable to the sun beam through the glass, with which a man can [get the sun's rays concentrated to] catch fire while the glass remains intact; and it is also comparable to the moon light through a dark bead, with which a man gets water drips while the bead does not crack."[118] Here He changes the "glass bottle" in the previous missionary metaphor to a "glass lens," and he adds an example of the vapor condensation phenomenon often seen in daily life. Whether these new metaphors are convincing or not, He tries to make them more easily understandable to the Chinese readers.

He Shizhen further develops his arguments by referring to Jiang Yuan 姜嫄, a legendary figure in Chinese mythology. She was said to be a consort of Di Ku 帝嚳 (Emperor Ku) and the mother of Houji 后稷, the ancestor of the ruling family of the Zhou Dynasty. Quoting from the poem *Shengmin* 生民 (The Birth of the [Zhou] People) in the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of Songs*), one of the Five Confucian Classics, He reminds the Chinese readers of Jiang Yuan's birth of Houji after she had stepped into the footprint of Shangdi 上帝, or the Lord-on-High. According to the poem, Jiang Yuan bore her child "with no bursting or rending, with no hurt or hard."[119] To He, this ancient Chinese example of miraculous birth with a divine blessing can be compared with Mary's virgin birth of Jesus with the Lord's grace. He concludes with a question that, if those anti-Christian people consider the story of Jiang Yuan a true record in Chinese history, why wouldn't they accept the Lord of Heaven's incarnation as a human and Mary's intact virgin body when giving birth to Jesus? Through the analogy of two model women in Confucian and Catholic teachings, He may hope to refute the serious accusations of Yang Guangxian. More importantly, he finds additional evidence to reinforce the syncretic approach of such elite converts as Xu Guangqi and Yang Tingyun, who have endeavoured to merge the Catholic devotion to Mary with the orthodox Confucian thoughts in late imperial Chinese society.

It is worth noting that, if put in a larger historical context, He's Jiang Yuan-Mary analogy suggests two more nuanced implications. On the one hand, it applies a reasoning in a way similar to the aforementioned Nüwa-Mary analogy made by Xie Zhaozhe. Xie may have unintentionally reinterpreted Mary's identity as a foreign counterpart of Nüwa in line with the native Chinese goddess tradition. He, however, would identify Mary as a comparable simile of Jiang Yuan, the legendary maternal ancestor of the Zhou people, in order to defend the legitimate role of Mary in the Catholic belief.

On the other hand, the Jiang Yuan-Mary analogy was also adopted by the French Jesuits from the so-called Figurism School, including Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730) and Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare (1666-1736). They applied typological exegesis and other interpretation methods to look for signs (*figurae*) in ancient Chinese classics, e.g., the *Shijing* and the *yijing*

[118] He Shizhen, *Chongzheng bibian*, in *CCT BnF*, vol. 16, 60.
[119] For an English translation of the poem in the *Shijing*, see Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1937), 241-243.

易經 (*Book of Changes*), in correspondence with the Christian doctrines.[120] In his Latin translation of the poem *Shengmin* from the *Shijing*, Bouvet explains on the "fact" that Jiang Yuan should be a Chinese *figura* of Mary, because she likewise received the divine blessing when offering sacrifice to Shangdi. And, she conceived Houji, the *figura* of Christ, in a similar mysterious way.[121] In his work on the Christian dogmas found in Chinese classics, Prémare presents a hermeneutical decoding of the name Jiang Yuan. He argues that the character Jiang 姜 refers to Jesus being conceived in the womb of Mary, while the character Yuan 嫄 refers to the virginity of Mary.[122] The novel exegetical explanations of Bouvet and Prémare must have been intended to create a Christianized image of Jiang Yuan for the targeted European readers. Yet, one can make a reverse argument, because the two Jesuits consciously delivered a further reinterpretation of Mary, for whom they found a *figura* or an embodiment in ancient Chinese history.

The examples above revolve around the key concern about Mary's perpetual virginity. In a chain of accusations and defenses, she has been reinterpreted either as an exalted example or as a disgraceful counter example of Confucian morality. The former was to justify Marian devotions as part of the Christian-Confucian orthodoxy, while the latter served as evidence to prove Christianity as a heterodox and evil foreign religion against the Confucian orthodoxy. These conflicting representations bounced between two different cultural traditions, and they reflected a self-other paradox among the missionaries, the converts, and the anti-Christians who tended to remodel the image of Mary in their own ways.

V. Conclusion: The Rise of a Chinese Marian Culture

This research presents a historical overview on the emergence and early development of Marian devotions in China between the 7th and the 17th centuries. In the dynamic exchanges between China and Europe during this millennium, there appeared a variety of representations and reinterpretations of Mary, by which one can trace her increasingly visible presence and influence in Chinese society.

The Nestorian missionaries in the Tang period and the Franciscan missionaries in the Yuan period made the first attempts to introduce Mary to China. Though the scant vestiges of Mary suggested her obscure status in these periods, there were vivid examples, in particular the Franciscan tombstone at Yangzhou, that can demonstrate an early conflation of Marian iconography and native Chinese representations.

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[120] Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume One, 635-1800*, 668-676.

[121] Geneviève Javary, "Hou ji, Prince Millet, l'agriculteur divin: interpretation du mythe chinois par le R.P. Joachim Bouvet," *Neue Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft*, 39 (1983), 16-42, 107-119.

[122] A. Bonnetty & Paul Perny, trans., *Vestiges des principaux dogmes chrétiens, tirés des anciens livres chinois, avec reproduction des textes chinois, par le P. de Prémare, Jésuite* (Paris: Bureau des Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne, 1878), 211-212, 435-444.

The early Jesuit missionaries, including Ricci, da Rocha, Longobardo, Vagnone, and Rho, made continual efforts to present a comprehensive introduction of Marian devotions in the China mission. Largely due to the lifelike feature, their visual representations of Mary aroused both curiosity and a taste of exoticism among the Chinese audience. There also appeared Marian images showing a conscious adaptation to Chinese artistic styles. Moreover, the Jesuits translated and published a series of Marian prayers and Mariological works, in which they explained such key Marian dogmas as the Immaculate Conception, the perpetual virginity of Mary, and Mary as a mediatrix between God and man. On the one hand, they carefully followed the authoritative views from the Church's medieval tradition. On the other hand, they more or less modified their explanations of the Marian dogmas in the Chinese context. A syncretic form of Mariology therefore took shape, as can be seen in Vagnone's description of Mary's filial piety and Rho's use of Muhuang as an all-embracing title of Mary. They endeavoured to create a composite image of Mary to meet both the Catholic standard for the Mother of God and the Confucian expectation of ideal womanhood. The same approach was adopted in devotional activities of the Marian sodalities and congregations over the 17th century. The missionaries and the Chinese converts developed organized forms of Marian piety in between European and Chinese traditions, so that a collective Christian-Confucian identity could be further consolidated in private and communal worships.

Whether converts or non-believers, the Chinese people in the late Ming and early Qing period made multilayered representations and reinterpretations in their encounters with Mary. Her image was often viewed as one of the exotic objects from the West. Though literati artists were impressed by the lifelike feature of Marian statues, paintings, and print illustrations, they generally showed contempt to the European artistic style due to its distinct *otherness*. In some cases, Mary was reinterpreted with displaced or distorted identities, and she became a deified figure comparable to popular Chinese goddesses such as Guanyin, Xihe shaonü, and Nüwa. In face of these misunderstandings and confusions, Xu Guangqi, Li Zhizao and other Chinese converts published a series of apologetic and edifying works to highlight Mary's exemplary virtues in parallel with the Confucian moral orthodoxy. Their refined discourses also marked a class-based division among elite converts and lower-class converts in the growth of Chinese Marian devotions.

Moreover, some key Marian dogmas, especially Mary's perpetual virginity, became the target in a sequence of heated debates among anti-Christian scholars and Confucian converts. While the former group applied the age-old mindset of Chinese-barbarian distinction in their accusations of Mary and the Christian religion, the latter group made apologetic arguments to defend the model image of Mary in Confucian moral terms. Their defenses resulted in further reinterpretations of the Jesuits' earlier arguments, and they meanwhile made conscious efforts to search for precedents in ancient Chinese classics in order to justify the legitimacy of their devotions to the Holy Mother.

In the midst of manifold and changing representations, Mary has been finally remodeled into an ever-virgin, a filial daughter, a caring and merciful mother, a noble lady, and above all these, a powerful mediatrix between God and man. Her image embodied an all-inclusive list of attributes tied with Christian spirituality and Confucian morality, thereby giving shape to a persistent Chinese Marian culture during and after the 17th century. As can be seen from the analysis above, this complex phenomenon in late imperial China opens up more possibilities for further research on Christianity across religious and cultural frontiers in the pre-modern world.

七至十七世紀聖母瑪利亞在中國的多面形象

摘要：

本文通過對一系列文本與圖像的详细解析，探討聖母瑪利亞信仰在七至十七世紀中國的出現及早期發展。文章首先考察景教傳教士和天主教方濟各會士將瑪利亞介紹到中國的最初嘗試，其後分析耶穌會士如何策略性地重塑瑪利亞形象，使其成為符合儒家正統道德觀的女德典範，最後闡述瑪利亞作為天主教教義的核心人物之一，中國人如何在與其相遇時做出多重回應和重新詮釋。信仰、德行、能力三者錯綜交織，最終形成了一個整合式的瑪利亞形象，而其多面特徵也促成了明清乃至近代中國社會聖母信仰的延續和發展。

關鍵詞:

聖母瑪利亞；中國聖母信仰；聖母像；耶儒合一；華夷觀

Abbreviations

CCT ARSI — *Yesuhui Luoma dang'anguan Ming–Qing Tianzhujiao wenxian* 耶穌會羅馬檔案館明清天主教文獻 (Chinese Christian Texts from the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus), ed. Nicolas Standaert and Adrian Dudink. Taipei: Ricci Institute, 2002.

CCT BnF — *Faguo Guojia tushuguan Ming–Qing Tianzhujiao wenxian* 法國國家圖書館明清天主教文獻 (Chinese Christian Texts from the National Library of France), ed. Nicolas Standaert, Adrian Dudink, and Nathalie Monnet. Taipei: Ricci Institute, 2009.

WX — *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian* 天主教東傳文獻 (Documents on Catholic Missions to the East), ed. Wu Xiangxiang 吳相湘. Zhongguo shixue congshu 中國史學叢書 24, Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1997.

WXSB — *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian sanbian* 天主教東傳文獻三編 (Third Series of Documents on Catholic Missions to the East)[123]. Zhongguo shixue congshu xubian 中國史學叢書續編 21, Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1998.

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[123] On the publisher's page it only indicates "撰述者：艾儒略等". Though the name of the modern editor is not provided, it seems awkward to address "Giulio Aleni" as the author/editor of this modern reprint collection. I think leaving it blank may be a good way to avoid any possible misleading information.

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Figures

Fig. 1. Tombstone of Katerina Vilionis, 1342, Yangzhou
Facsimile of original rubbing [Rouleau, “Yangchow Latin Tombstone,” Plate I.]

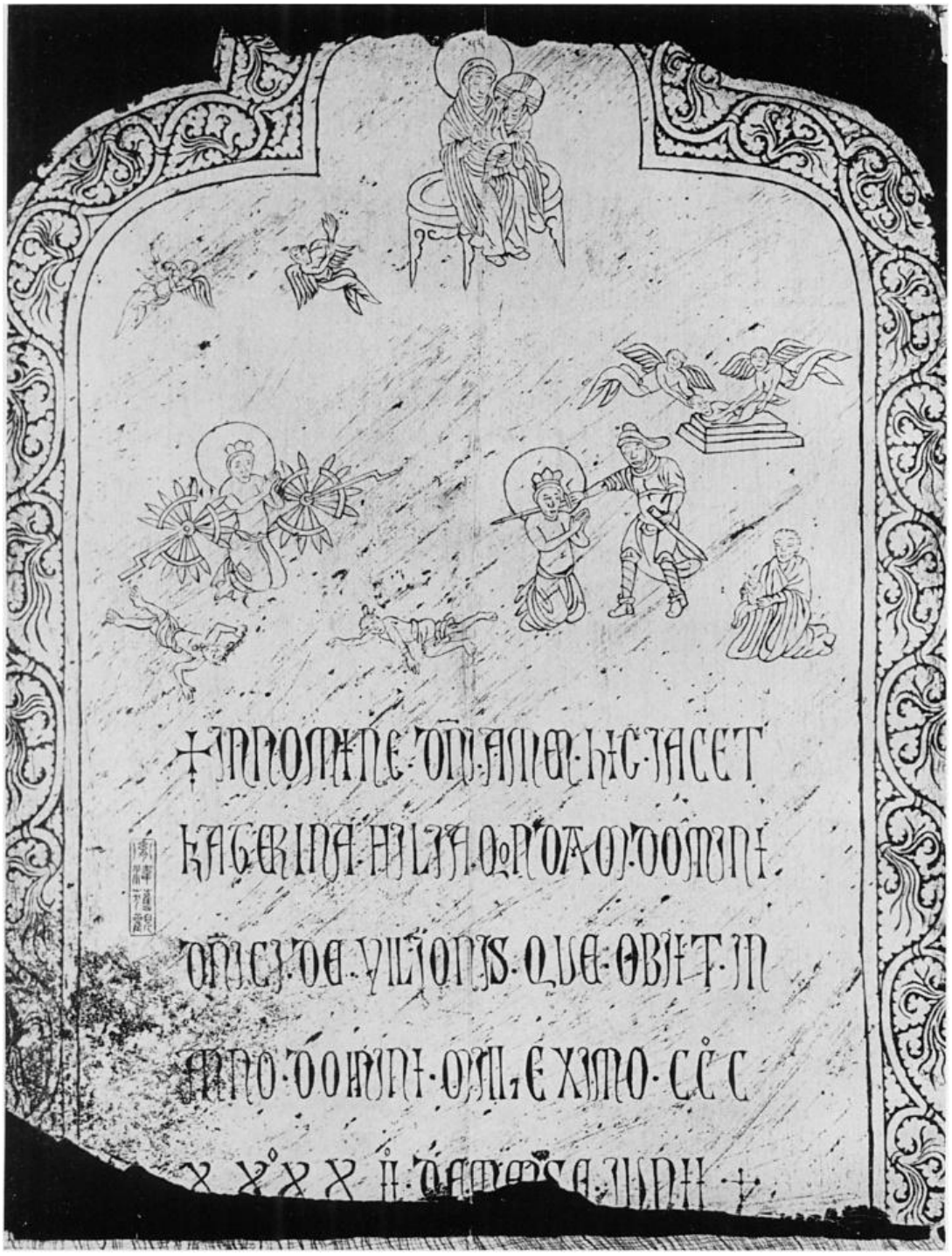

Fig. 2. Negative of Fig. 1 facsimile [Rouleau, “Yangchow Latin Tombstone,” Plate II.]

Fig. 3. “Annunciatio,” from *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (Antwerp, 1593), Jerónimo Nadal, courtesy of Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (86-B24301)

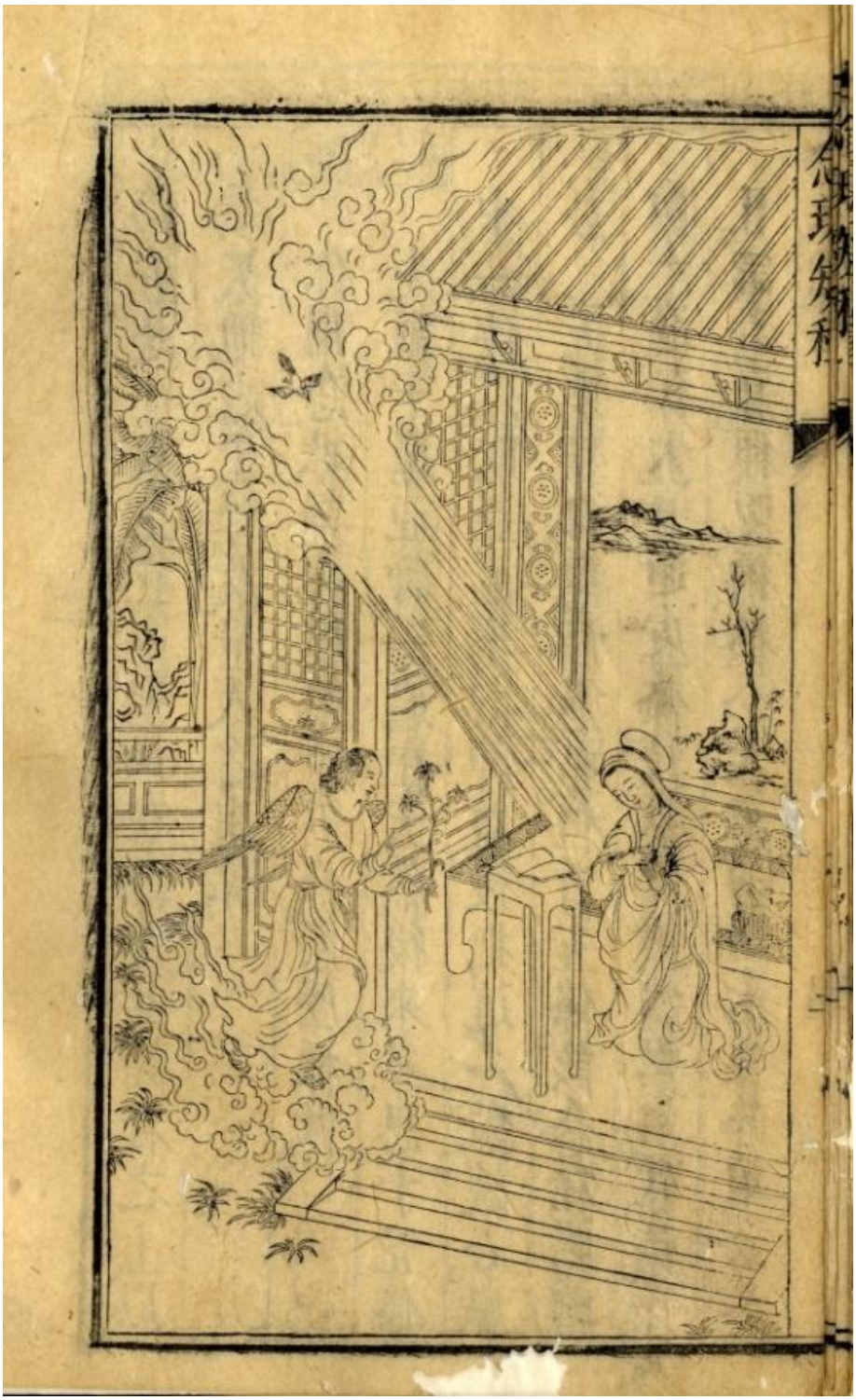

Fig. 4. “Annunciation,” from *Song nianzhu guicheng* (Rules for Reciting the Rosary, 1619), João da Rocha (1565–1623), courtesy of Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome, Jap-Sin I 43

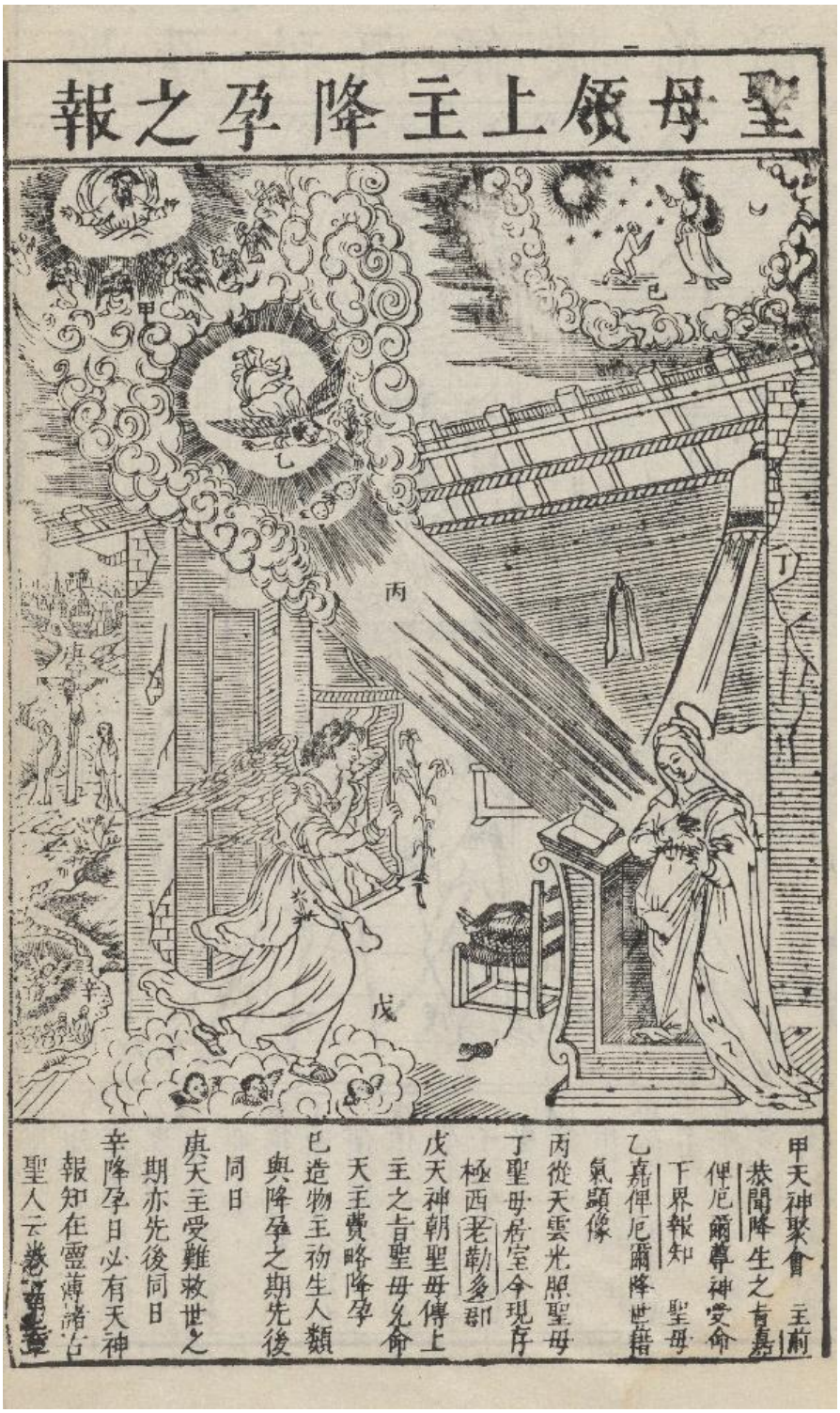

Fig. 5. “Shengmu ling shangzhu jiangyu zhibao 聖母領上主降孕之報 (The Holy Mother Being Announced about the Incarnation of the Lord),” from: *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie*, 1637, Giulio Aleni, courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University (52-1049)

Fig. 6. “Annunciation,” from *Jincheng shuxiang* (Books and Pictures Presented to the Emperor, 1640), Adam Shall von Bell (1592-1666), courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Chinois 6757

Fig. 7. “Annunciation,” Raphaël Sadeler II (1584-?), after Hans Rottenhammer, Prentenkabinet, Royal Library Brussels

Fig. 8. The country of Tianzhu 天竺, in *Dongyi tuxiang* 東夷圖像 (Illustrations of Eastern Barbarians, 1586), Cai Ruxian 蔡汝賢

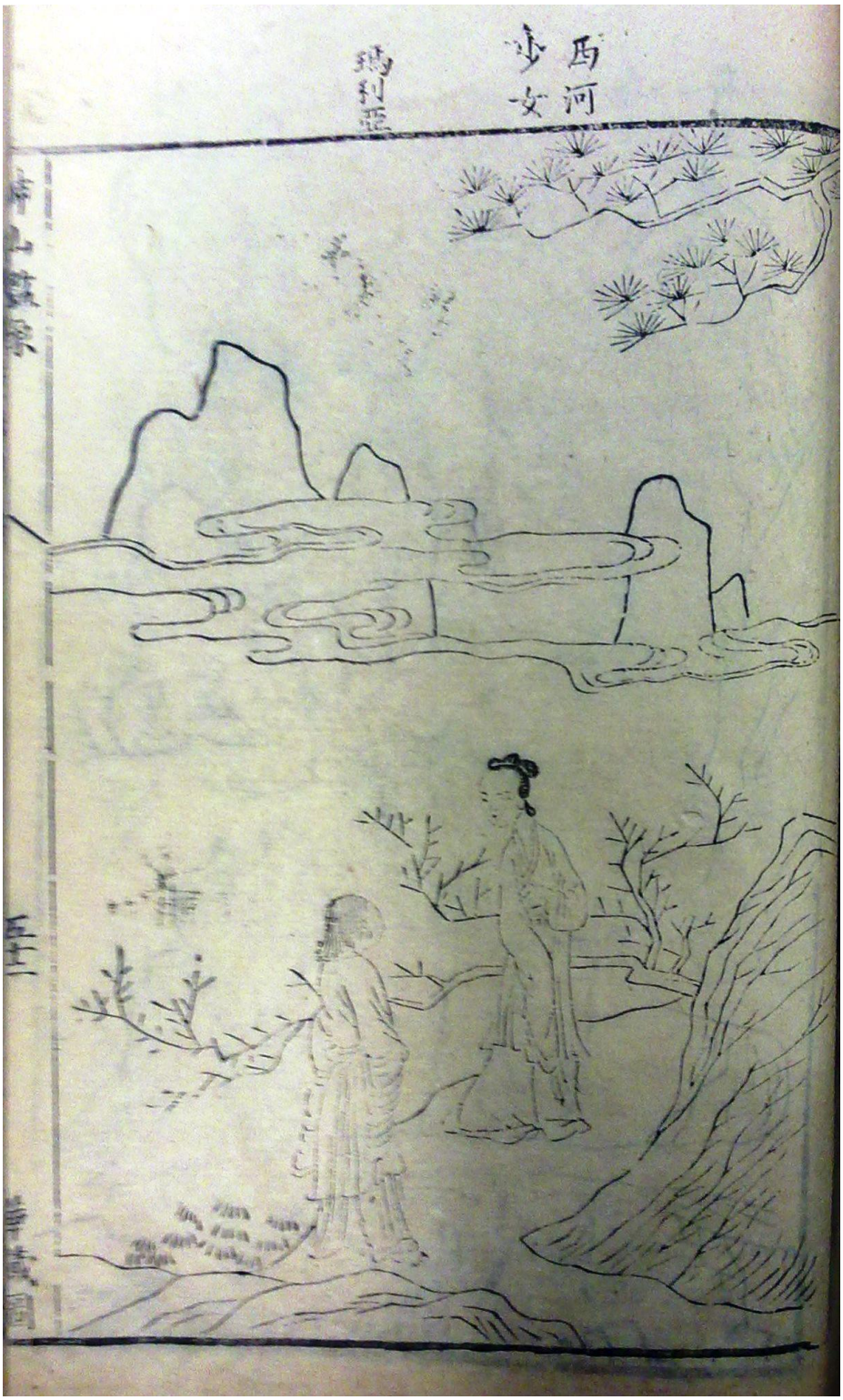

Fig. 9. Mary and Maid of Xihe, in *Lidai shenxian tongjian* 歷代神仙通鑑 (Comprehensive Accounts on the Immortals through the Dynasties, 1700), Xu Dao 徐道 and Cheng Yuqi 程毓奇