



# 漢言

基督教文化研究所 News  
INSTITUTE OF SINO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES



Autumn 2016

33 To Fung Shan Road, N.T., Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2694-6868

Fax: (852) 2601-6977

Website: <http://www.iscs.org.hk>

E-mail: [info@iscs.org.hk](mailto:info@iscs.org.hk)

## Essay

### The Religion-State Relationship in Contemporary China

Prof. LAI Pan-chiu

Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts,  
Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Chairperson, ISCS Academic  
Committee

Due to the phenomenal growth of religions and the complexity of religion-state relation in contemporary China, this theme has become an important research area for scholars of Religious Studies as well as China Studies. Because of the radical divergence between the mainstream of religion-state relation in the Chinese and Christian traditions, the tensions between Christianity and the contemporary Chinese government are to a certain extent inevitable. However, considering the pluralistic alternatives within the Christian tradition as well as the significant difference between the government of Communist China and that of pre-modern China, there is also a theoretical possibility of developing a relatively more stable and peaceful relation between the state and the Christian churches.

Regarding the Chinese religious traditions, the first thing to be said is that the state in pre-modern China is not entirely secular. In fact, religion played an important role in the legitimization of the traditional Chinese government. Perhaps one may even say that in pre-modern China, the state itself was also a religious institution with the emperor as its Chief Diviner and Chief Priest. The divine mandate was supposed to be earned and maintained not by birth but by good deeds or merits, but performing relevant religious ritual properly, and governing the empire efficiently. When there is natural disaster, the King might have to perform rituals and offer prayers for his people,



including confessing to and petitioning Heaven to bear the guilt on behalf of his people. Therefore, the state is supposed to have the right to decide what is the true religion permitted, and to crush all the heresies and obscene worship (淫祠), which are more or less equivalent to what are labeled as “evil cults” (邪教) in contemporary China.

This model of “subordination of religion to the state” is expressed not only in the state’s establishing a particular department to supervise and control the religions allowed by the government. The state’s control or intervention covers not only the institutional and personnel aspects, e.g. the number of temples, monks and nuns, but the deities to be worshipped. In fact, other than suppression, the state can also absorb the worship of certain deities originated at local level into the pantheon of the state cult. For example, Mazu (媽祖) had been first a goddess believed able to protect and save fishermen or people traveling by sea, and widely worshipped in the coastal villages in South-East China. The state then approved the worship by conferring various honorary titles associated with the function of protecting the nation and even making Mazu an official object of state cult. The measure of absorption of course can be applied to not only the objects of worship, but also the religious leaders as well as religious organizations. Most importantly, this model was accepted by religious leaders, including Buddhists. The famous Buddhist monk Dao’an (道安) wrote, “Without relying on the emperor, it is difficult to launch the matters of the Dharma” (不依國主，則法事難立) and even went so far as to say, “The Emperor is the boss of religion” (君為教主). Even during the republican period, many Buddhists endeavored to reform Buddhism and some of them looked for support from the government.

Viewed in this historical perspective, the religious policy of the Chinese Communist regime is quite understandable yet dubious. It is understandable because it follows the “habit” inherited from pre-modern China. It is dubious because given the atheistic position of Marxism, the government should not appeal to any divine being to legitimize itself. Although the theory of divine right of the king was rejected, it remains possible to legitimize the Communist regime by presenting a Marxist theory of history as the truth of history. However,



with the anti-religious position proclaimed by Marxism, the absorption or incorporation of religion into the state became much more difficult than in pre-modern China. The religion-state relation in pre-modern China was heavily influenced by Confucianism, which supported and was supported by a hierarchical socio-political system based on lineage (宗法制度). Religious adherents were expected to be obedient to the emperor, who represented the pinnacle of this hierarchy. One of the serious problems is that based on the theory of the divine right of the emperor, it was believed that the emperor had the authority to rule anything within his kingdom and there is no mechanism of check and balance to limit this totalitarian authority. Religions, especially those of foreign origin, which do not depend on this socio-political system of lineage, were often subject to suspicion, control and even suppression.

The tensions in church-state relation in China are quite similar to and are inherited from those in the western world. The appointment of Catholic bishops in China repeats the investiture struggle in medieval Europe. The exact arrangement is subject to negotiation with the state. However, the Catholic Church as a matter of principle rejects state interference. The case of Protestantism is relatively more complicated as practices have varied from denomination to denomination. Under Communist rule, the Protestant churches in Mainland China became post-denominational in the sense that all Protestant churches come under the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the China Christian Council. Their particular theological understanding of state-church relations influences the actual relation between the Protestant churches and the Communist government.

The model of "subordination of religion to the state" seems unacceptable for the Protestant churches because it violates the principle of the separation of church and state. However, the case of the Church of England may be highlighted as an example well known for its recognition of the King or Queen as its Supreme Governor on earth. In actual practice, the state may have certain rights or influences in church matters, including the appointment of clergy. As it happened, Bishop Ding Guangxun (K. H. Ting, 1915-2012) had been consecrated as an Anglican bishop long before becoming the leader under the Communist rule. Similarly, the present Anglican Archbishop of Hong Kong accepted the political appointment to serve as a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (人大政协). However, many Anglicans rejected the model and left the Church of England. Thus, subordinating one single church institution to the state may not be an effective solution. In principle, the head of state of Communist China is supposed to be an atheist and not a Christian. Therefore, it is rather difficult to conceive, from both Communist and Christian perspectives, how this person can be proclaimed "Supreme Governor on Earth" of the Church in China.

The experience of contemporary Chinese Christians in Mainland China shows that it is of paramount importance, first, to develop the rule of law and to constrain the administrative power of the state. It may then be able to legally guarantee and effectively protect the civil rights of religious freedom, and to develop a healthier relation between the state and religions, especially Christianity, in contemporary China. ■

(An Extract of the author's presentation in the conference of "Religion-State Relationship in the Chinese Context" in 2016)

## Pasquale D'Elia and a Study of Christian Woodcut Arts in Late Ming

QU Yi      Lecturer, Nanjing Arts University  
ISCS Visiting Scholar 2016

Since the late 17th century when the Jesuit missionaries started their work in China, European Christian art works as missionary tools had been known among people in late Ming Dynasty. Although most of the works are no longer available, woodcuts remain as they could be mass produced at a low price. The exchange of arts between east and west began with these Christian woodcuts brought by missionaries.



The earliest Christian woodcuts were found in books. They include CHENG Junfang's *Cheng-shi Mo-yuan* (程氏墨苑, Xinan in Anhui, 1606), *The Method of the Rosary* (誦念珠規程, Nanjing, ca1620) by João da Rocha (1566-1623), *The Illustrated Life of the Lord of Heaven Incarnate* (天主降生出像經解, Jinjiang, 1637) by Giulio Aleni (1582-1649), and *An illustrated Life of Christ* (進呈書像, Beijing, 1640) by Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592-1666). Apart from the first one, the other three were published by Jesuits in China. They made use of pictures and words to teach how *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* was to be read and introduced the life of Jesus. Now these works are kept in different libraries and archives in the west.

The French eastern studies scholar Henri Cordier (1849-1925) was the first to list these books from Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris with entries.<sup>1</sup> In the 1930s these books were discovered by the Jesuit Pasquale D'Elia and he wrote *Le Origini Dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese 1583-1640* in Italian,<sup>2</sup> starting the study of Christian woodcut arts in the late Ming Dynasty. D'Elia was an Italian priest, Sinologist and Jesuit born in Pietracatella of Campobasso on 2 April, 1890. In 1904 he entered the Jesuit society. During 1909-1913, D'Elia studied at St. Mary's College in Canterbury and on the Island of Jersey. He decided to serve in China when he was 22 years old. Thus, D'Elia learned Chinese culture and history in Xujiahui, Shanghai from 1913 to 1917. He finished his theological training in Europe at Woodstock and Hastings in Maryland from 1918 to 1921 and then served at Paray-le-Monial in France. In 1922 D'Elia was sent to China again. First he did missionary work in Bangbu, Anhui from 1923 to 1925, and then worked at Shanghai Aurora University until 1926. Afterwards he was sent to the Sinologist center at Xujiahui to do some academic translation and writing. In 1934 D'Elia was appointed professor at Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana for teaching history of mission and Sinology until he died 29 years later. Since 1941 he had also held the chair of Chinese literature at the University of Rome.

During his stay in China, D'Elia translated Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People" into French and made a great impact.<sup>3</sup> The republic government in Nanjing made 5000 copies and requested an English version to increase its international influence.<sup>4</sup> After returning to Europe, D'Elia wrote many works on missiology and sinology, making use of his training and experience in Chinese.<sup>5</sup> Today D'Elia is seen as

the “last missionary Sinologist from Italy”. His most famous work published in China is the 3-volume complete works of Matteo Ricci written with great effort from 1942 to 1949.<sup>6</sup> D’Elia had reference of many Chinese classics, writings and historical documents kept in Europe, integrating them with Ricci’s manuscripts discovered by the Italian Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi (1861-1956) in 1909 as a critically annotated and indexed work.<sup>7</sup>

Besides, D’Elia also discovered some Chinese documents from Archivum Romanum Societas Iesu in Rome. In 1934 he found the manuscripts of the Portuguese-Chinese Dictionary (1584-1588) compiled by Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci. There are about 6,000 Portuguese entries and it is the earliest foreign language lexicon for Chinese. In 1939 D’Elia discovered *The Method of the Rosary*, *The Illustrated Life of the Lord of Heaven Incarnate* and *An illustrated Life of Christ* kept in Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma. He published *Le Origini Dell’Arte Cristiana Cinese* (1583-1640) in Italian in the same year.

Although Berthold Laufer (1874-1934) published *Christian Art in China* in English in 1910,<sup>8</sup> his work only mentioned 5 Christian art works. He discovered in Xi’an two albums, 4 woodcuts with Christian materials, a series of aquatints on Emperor Qianlong’s Conquest of the Western Regions (乾隆平定西域銅版畫) by Jesuits in 18<sup>th</sup> century, and illustrations of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* translated in Chinese in 19<sup>th</sup> century. The greatest contribution of Laufer is that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century he discovered in Xi’an “Madonna in China” (中國聖母, now kept in Field Museum of Natural History) and DONG Qichang’s (董其昌) album of six pages.

D’Elia’s writings on Chinese Christian arts focus on late Ming during 1583-1640. The greatest contribution is that in 1939 in Rome D’Elia discovered three sets of books which included woodcut pictures. He also affirmed that the prototype was the “Evangelicae historiae imagines” published by the Jesuit Jerónimo Nadal (1507-1580) in Rome 1593. This started the study of the east-west exchange of woodcuts.

After D’Elia the French Jesuit Henri Bernard-Maitre (1889-1975) and Joseph Dehergne (1903-1990) and Dutch missionary Jozeph Jennes discovered other places where these two books and developed further studies. As a matter of fact, missionaries were not the only scholars to study Christian woodcuts in the late Ming period as part of mission and art history.<sup>9</sup>

Since D’Elia was not a genuine historian of arts, he thought that the woodcut “The Method of the Rosary” adopted Chinese style entirely and inferred that the author could possibly be DONG Qichang. This is similar to what Laufer did. He thought that “Madonna in China” was by TANG Yin (1470-1524) and the album of 6 pages by DONG Qichang (1555-1636). On the one hand, this shows that these missionaries did not know much about Chinese art history (Dong never drew portraits); on the other hand, they tended to connect late Ming Christian arts with famous artists to attract attention to Chinese Christian arts.

Despite this, if D’Elia had not discovered these woodcuts and had not written his book, later scholars would not be paying attention to late Ming Christian woodcuts. Although D’Elia had not converted any single Chinese, he made great contributions in the fields of the history of mission, Sinology and Chinese Christian arts that would bear fruit for the exchange of culture and even the kingdom of God. ■

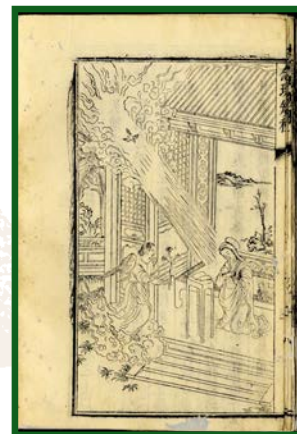


Fig. 1 “The Annunciation”, *The Method of the Rosary*, 1620, Nanjing, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Jap.Sin. I. 43 b.

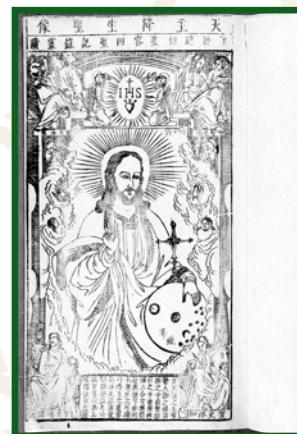


Fig. 2 “Portrait of the Descending God”, *The Illustrated Life of the Lord of Heaven Incarnate*, 1637, Jinjiang, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Jap. Sin. 187.



Fig. 3 “Heaven and Earth All Worship One God”, *An illustrated Life of Christ*, 1640, Beijing, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Sin 107.

1 Henri Cordier, *L'imprimerie sino-européenne en Chine*, Paris: Leroux, 1901.

2 Pasquale M. D’Elia, S.J., *Le Origini Dell’Arte Cristiana Cinese 1583-1640*, Reale Accademia d’Italia, Studii Documenti 9 (Roma 1939).

3 Pasquale M. D’Elia, S.J., *Le triple déisme de Suen Wen* (Shanghai: Editions Tou-Sè-Wè, 1929).

4 Cf. 劉國鵬 〈天主教與國家整合：以南京國民政府執政初期天主教教育和教會教產問題為例〉，載《宗教學研究》，2011.4.

5 For the writings of D’Elia cf. Roman Malek, “The Legacy of Pasquale d’Elia, S.J. [...] (1890-1963): Mission Historian and Sinologist”, in *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* 32 (2010), pp. 36-61; For the amendments of the study of D’Elia cf. 方家，〈故義大利漢學家德禮賢著作正誤〉，載《方家六十自定稿》（台北：台灣學生書局，1969），頁1721-1738.

6 Pasquale M. D’Elia, S. J., *Fonti Ricciane: documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l’Europa e la Cina (1579-1615)*, 3 volumes (Roma, Libreria dello Stato, 1942-1949).

7 For the amendments of the translation of D’Elia cf. 黃一農，〈兩頭蛇：明末清初的第一代天主教徒〉（新竹：清華大學出版社，2005）；Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610* (OUP, 2012).

8 Berthold Laufer, *Christian Art in China*, Exact from “Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen. Jahrgang XIII. Erste Abteilung. Ostasiatische Studien”, 1910.

9 For research documents on Christian woodcuts in late Ming cf. Chinese Christian Texts Database.



## Tao Fong Overseas Scholarship Students' Dissertations Awarded



The doctoral dissertation “Leben vor den letzten Dingen. Die Dostojewski-Rezeption im frühen Werk von Karl Barth und Eduard Thurneysen (1915-1923)” written by Prof. HONG Liang, our former Tao Fong Overseas Scholarship student and now Assistant Professor of the China Graduate School of Theology, was awarded three prizes, including “Promotionspreis der besten Promotion der evangelisch-theologischen Fakultät der Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen 2016”, “Ernst Wolf-Preis 2017”, and “Manfred Lautenschläger Award for Theological Promise 2017”. Prof. Christoph Schwöbel from University of Tübingen commented that the thesis had made use of new materials with a high accuracy and surpassed existing interpretations of Barth and Thurneysen on Dostoyevsky. Thus it showed a new dimension in the shaping of dialectical theology and revealed many details of the relationship between Barth and Thurneysen.”



Another former Tao Fong Overseas Scholarship student, Dr. Thomas Qu, now lecturer at Beijing Normal University, was awarded “Promotionspreis der besten Promotion der evangelisch-theologischen Fakultät der Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen 2016”. This prize was established by the Forschungszentrum Internationale und Interdisziplinäre Theologie at Heidelberg. Ten distinguished doctoral or post-doctoral theses are awarded every year. Christian Link, Professor Emeritus of the University of Bochum, commented on Dr. Qu’s “Barth

und Goethe: Die Goethe-Rezeption Karl Barths 1906-1921” as follows: “It is a pioneer work filling a long-felt gap. It interprets the second edition of Barth’s *The Epistle to the Romans* in a much clearer and better way than that oriented from Neo-Kantianism.”

## Research Fellow’s Visit to Germany and Switzerland



2017 is the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, our partner Mission EineWelt held a summer course on “Reflecting Reformation” from 4 to 17 July 2016, and representatives from different partners over the world were invited. Our Academic Officer, Prof. Jason Lam, was invited to deliver a public lecture at Augustana-Hochschule in Neuendettelsau on 5 July. His lecture “Studying Christianity in Contemporary China: A Challenge to Imagination of Christian Identity” addresses several core theological issues during the Reformation era through reflecting on the identity of scholars studying Christianity in China nowadays. Since the participants came from different countries and embraced different understandings of Christian identities, a heated discussion was triggered. Prof. Lam took the opportunity to introduce the recent development of Sino-Christian theology, and participants were all interested in this emergent theological qua cultural movement in the Chinese-speaking world.



Afterwards Prof. Lam visited Basel to participate in the 12<sup>th</sup> International Bonhoeffer Congress hosted at Mission 21 (formerly the Basel Mission). He was one of the keynote speakers of the last meeting two years ago

and was the first Asian speaker at the event. This congress was bigger than ever with more



than 100 participants. Apart from Europe and America, there were also many scholars from Africa and Asia (mainly Japan and South Korea). Prof. Lam was the only speaker from East Asia, and he delivered a paper on “Engaging Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Carl Schmitt in a Contemporary Chinese Context” in a panel on 9 July. Attendants included scholars from areas of law, theology and Chinese studies, and all were intrigued. After the congress, Prof. Lam visited Mission 21 on behalf of ISCS (their representatives visited ISCS last May), exchanged ideas with their different departments and explored the possibility of future cooperation.

## Workshop on “Religion-State Relationship in Chinese Context”



Sino-Christian theology has been emphasizing inter-disciplinary studies and dialogue since its emergence, and this perspective is very meaningful for the discussion of religion-state relations in contemporary China. There are many academic resources from the humanities and social sciences on this topic but a platform for dialogue is needed. To remediate this situation ISCS held a workshop on “Religion-State Relations in the Chinese Context” from 14 to 15 July 2016. We invited scholars from different disciplines and places including China, Hong Kong and USA for an in-depth discussion in the two-day program. An inter-disciplinary approach was chosen including philosophy, theology, history, politics, law and sociology. We hoped that this inter-disciplinary approach might enhance the construction of Sino-Christian studies. The schedule of the workshop, the participants, and their topics were as follows:



14 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016	
Opening Ceremony	<b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. Jason Lam (ISCS Academic Officer) <b>1. Opening Speech:</b> Mr. Daniel Yeung (ISCS Director) <b>2. Keynote Speaker:</b> Prof. LAI Pan Chiu (Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, CUHK) <b>Topic:</b> Religion-State Relationship in Contemporary China
Session One Discipline: <b>Philosophy</b>	<b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. Benedict Chan (Assistant Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy, BUHK) <b>1. Speaker:</b> Prof. WANG Yunping (Professor, School of Public Affairs, Xiamen University) <b>Topic:</b> Confucian View of Religion in its Early Stages and its Meaning for Religion-State Relations <b>2. Respondent:</b> Prof. HUANG Yong (Professor, Department of Philosophy, CUHK)
Session Two Discipline: <b>Law</b>	<b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. Robin Lovin (Director of Research, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton) <b>1. Speaker:</b> Prof. ZHANG Qianfan (Professor, School of Law, Peking University) <b>Topic:</b> Religious Freedom and its Legal Limitation in China <b>2. Respondent:</b> Dr. Joshua Mauldin (Research Fellow, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton)
Session Three Discipline: <b>Politics</b>	<b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. KWOK Wai-luen (Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy, BUHK) <b>1. Speaker:</b> Prof. SUN Lei (Professor, School of Political Science & International Relations, Tongji University) <b>Topic:</b> Relations between Confucianism and Chinese Politics: History, Reality and Future <b>2. Respondent:</b> Prof. Benedict Chan (Assistant Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy, BUHK)
15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016	
Session Four Discipline: <b>History</b>	<b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. SUN Lei (Professor, School of Political Science & International Relations, Tongji University) <b>1. Speaker:</b> Prof. KWOK Wai-luen (Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy, BUHK) <b>Topic:</b> Social Justice in the Journal of Chinese Foreign Religion, 1911-1949: Christianity and Islam <b>2. Respondent:</b> Dr. CHEN Ruiwen (Lecturer, SKH Ming Hua Theological College)
Session Five Discipline: <b>Theology</b>	<b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. Jason Lam <b>1. Speaker:</b> Prof. XIE Zhibin (Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tongji University) <b>Topic:</b> Between Acquiescence and Opposition: What Kind of Theology is Required by the Chinese Political Structure? <b>2. Respondent:</b> Prof. LAI Pan-chiu (Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, CUHK)
Closing Ceremony	<b>Chairperson:</b> Dr. Joshua Mauldin (Research Fellow, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton) <b>1. Keynote Speaker:</b> Prof. Robin Lovin (Director of Research, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton) <b>Topic:</b> Politics, Ethics, and Religion <b>2. Respondent:</b> Prof. XIE Zhibin (Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tongji University)