One Century of Vain Missionary Work among Muslims in China

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The Cross Battles the Crescent

By

Raphael Israeli

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-1640-7
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1640-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vi

Introduction 1
The Muslim Plight in China

Chapter One 17
Christians on Mission in China and other Foreign Lands

Chapter Two 32
Missionaries Encounter Muslims in China

Chapter Three 63
Muslim Torments and Hesitations

Chapter Four 92
Methods of Evangelism Among Chinese Muslims

Chapter Five 120
Clashes of Doctrine and Reality

Chapter Six 153
The Balance of Gains and Losses

Chapter Seven 167
The Muslim Counter Attack

Chapter Eight 186
Missionary Work in Perspective

Summary 205

Bibliography 210

Analytical Index 215

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much has been written and published about Christianity in China and the Christian missionary work accomplished there, however less has been known about the particular interest that the Christian Mission had evinced towards the Muslims of China, and much less has been recorded about the Muslim reactions to this activity. Furthermore, almost nothing has been concluded in terms of the dialectical interaction between Christianity and Islam in that part of the world. At the outset of the encounter between these two great universal religions elsewhere, Islam had acted as the conqueror which either lured the conquered Christians into Islamization so as to benefit from the advantages that accrued to the sons of the master faith or be left to the fate of living as inferior *dhimmis* in Islamdom. However, in the pre-modern era the roles were reversed when the Christian West, in the process of colonization, encroached upon the Muslim dominion, and prevailed in various ways upon some of the conquered peoples, many of them Muslims, to evangelize. Beginning with the post Opium War era in China (1840), when the regime of unequal treaties was enforced by the Western Imperial powers, this opening leeway for their work brought Christian missionaries into the deep interior of the Chinese continent, where they encountered Chinese common people, including the many minorities among them, some of whom were the Hui Muslims.

Unlike other parts of the world where Christianity encountered a population previously conquered by Islam and then attempted to evangelize many of its adherents in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, with some spectacular successes, in China the situation was different. The local Muslims, for the most part members of the Hui ethnic group, lived with permanent friction from the ruling Qing Dynasty authorities, against which they repeatedly rebelled. However, they appeared more receptive to missionary work both because it constituted a sort of relief from the torments of the Dynasty, and due to the similarity, they discovered in the missionary teachings, with a God in Heaven, notions of sin and righteousness, rituals and the familiarity of Biblical stories, though in their Qur'anic version to which they had become accustomed in the pursuance of their creed. These monotheistic religions were at deep variance from the

Confucian culture of local gods and ancestor worship, among which they lived, and which seemed to them impermeable to any monotheistic creed.

In this treatise we shall delve into the issue of the varying degrees of success of Islam in China, where no other religion had taken root after the penetration of Buddhism in the 4th Century AD, amidst the crisis occasioned by the fall of the great Han Dynasty (2nd Century BC to 2nd Century AD), and the relatively marginal achievements of Christianity there compared for example with Korea, where followers of Jesus made a relatively much greater impact. Even more marginal was the breakthrough of Christianity among the Hui Chinese Muslims, after decades of devoted efforts by generations of extraordinarily gifted missionaries, who at first launched their enterprise in a hysterical fear lest Islam, their formidable religious rival, succeed in sweeping the immense Chinese population under its sway during the 19th Century Muslim rebellion. However, these efforts terminated in frustration and Islam came close to being extirpated from China after the Communist Revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949.

The relative revival of Christianity during the more relaxed era following the reforms and liberalization of Deng Xiaoping and his successors in the post-Mao era during the 1980's and thereafter, has been immersed in an effort to survive State pressures, which are generated by suspicion of any organized religion or extra-communist party social organization such as the Falon gong. In this political and social ambience, evangelizing Chinese Muslims has not been one of the top priorities of local Christianity in China, which today focuses on strengthening its own ranks, rather than propagating its faith to others. Due to the fact that foreign Christian missionaries are no longer allowed to operate in China, the drive to convert others which used to be championed by Christian missionaries a century ago, was not inherited by the contemporary struggling local Christians who are well content just to survive.

Christians had to settle numerous ideological issues in their missionary work among Muslims in China. The various methods they adopted were tested through a process of trial and error in an attempt to capture the hearts of the Chinese Muslims, either by direct evangelization through translations of materials into Chinese and Arabic, or through medical work among their prospective converts, through educational systems they developed at all levels of instruction, and diffusion of doctrinal literature among those who were capable of absorbing this material. These methods had been used by Christian missionaries among the general Chinese

population in other regions, but with regard to the Hui they had been adapted both on the basis of experience acquired from working among Muslims populations elsewhere, and through lessons learned from their field contacts with Chinese Muslims.

Judith Hershon, my copy editor, is to be commended for her untiring toil in correcting the text. Above all I am indebted, as always to my home base, the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I am particularly obliged to my research assistant, Hiddai Segev, who laboriously rummaged through many papers and books to find relevant materials. But all the errors remain solely my responsibility.

Jerusalem, Summer 2017

INTRODUCTION:
THE MUSLIM PLIGHT IN CHINA

When Christian missionaries arrived in China they found an already well-established Chinese Muslim community settled there since the Tang Dynasty (7th- 10th Centuries). That inter-cultural encounter had developed partly through the maritime Silk Road which brought Muslim merchants, both Arabs and Persians, from the Persian Gulf to the China coast, and partly overland following the Talas battle (751 AD) where the Muslim warriors vanquished the Tang troops, and then when the Tang authorities asked for Muslim help from Central Asia to quell the An Lushan Rebellion (755 AD). Following these events, Muslims gradually settled in China, first temporarily, especially on the China coast, and then permanently since the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty in the 14th Century when the Muslim pattern of settlement spread inland.

Under the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), which was itself an alien Manchu population, a head-on collision developed between the established Confucian order, jealously guarded by the ruling emperors, and the local Muslim population, mainly Hui, brought about by a series of Islamic rebellions which threw most of the Northwest and Southwest into chaos for an entire generation (1850s-1870), concurrently with the other major Chinese rebellions (Taiping, Nian) threatening the very existence of the traditional Imperial rule. During the Qing Dynasty, an energetic policy of Sinicization, which was launched in the 1720s, was directed specifically against the non-Chinese ethnic groups who still constituted a majority of the population in a number of mountainous enclaves in the Southwest and in the central provinces of Hunan and Hubei.[1] The core of the policy was to replace the native tribal system with a Chinese local administrator, and to promote an educational system that would encourage a gradual cultural assimilation of these groups. Some aborigines were chosen for indoctrination to travel to the Capital. They then returned as local officials in their native regions to carry out the work of acculturation, being

[1] Ho Pint-ti, "Salient Aspects in Chinese History", in Ho and Tsou (ed.), *China in Crisis*, Vol. I, University of Chicago, 1968. pp. 4-5.

themselves converted to the Chinese feeling of superiority by what they had learned over their former tribal ways. For example, they substituted Confucian and state-approved Buddhist festivals for native rituals and observances, so that the non-Chinese peoples would be drawn into the orbit of Chinese symbolism.[2]

During that period limitations were placed on Muslim freedom of worship. More specifically, in 1731 the ritual slaughtering of animals for consumption was forbidden, and under the Qianlong Emperor construction of new mosques and the pilgrimage to Mecca were prohibited. This emphasis on acculturation was even more pronounced with sizable minorities which were attached to particular territories, such as the Mongols and the Tibetans. For example, in Inner Mongolia, the Manchus threw open large tracts of land to cultivation, thus perpetrating violence to Mongol traditions that the earth is sacred, and to ancient tribal laws that forbid the plowing of more than the necessary minimum amount of land for two years in succession. As a result, the Mongols have completely forgotten the Mongol speech and, except for differences in their dress, are almost indistinguishable from the Chinese.[3]

The Muslims differed nonetheless from all other minority groups in that, although concentrated mainly in marginal areas of the empire, they were located in virtually every province and every sizable urban agglomeration throughout the country, and their presence was not merely statistical. They had large communities in the capitals (Nanjing and Beijing), dominating almost exclusively certain trades in many areas, leaving their impact throughout the country though more as individuals than as a collective. This may explain the ubiquitous nature of jealousy, hatred and contempt in which they were held by the Chinese at large. Conversely, from the authorities' point of view, no crash program in a specified territory could force all the Hui to acculturate, since there was no such single territory. For this reason, while other major minorities were handled under the Qing by the *Lifan Yuan*[4] which controlled them by controlling their territory, the Hui were free from such control. Secondly, since the Muslims could not accept the principle of filial piety and participate in the rituals of the ancestral shrines through which the Chinese

[2] Arthur Wright "Comments of Ho's paper", Ibid. p. 38.
[3] Owen Lattimore, "The Chinese as a Dominant Race", *Asia*, XXVIII, 1928, p. 450
[4] This office controlled Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang where the Uyghur Muslim minority dwelt, as compared with the Hui Muslims in China Proper.

attempted to "civilize" the non-Chinese "barbarians", the Muslims chose to remain outside the pale of the sought for "refinement and virtue". Neither was the stratagem that the Qing used with the non-Chinese aborigines workable with the Muslims. The Hui had their own sense of superiority, their own festivals and religious symbolism, and their own learning and culture, and needed no "uplifting" to the heights of the Han civilization. In short, they did not yield to the *mission civilisatrice* of their Chinese hosts. The result was, as an eyewitness missionary remarked that:

> Close contact with this people has given convincing proof that the line of demarcation between Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese is as great as, if not greater than, that between Chinese and foreigners...Although the Muslims have had, in one sense, to conform to Chinese law, there is another sense in which they are always a law unto themselves. The profound teachings of Buddha and Confucius are nothing to them.[5]

Indeed, in the eyes of the thinking Chinese literati, who would formulate their objections to Muslims in intellectual and rational terms, the gap between the two communities might have looked so hopelessly unbridgeable that the Hui could easily come under the sway of popular stereotypes, which tended to make the gap even wider. These stereotypes, which grew to grossly exaggerated misjudgments of the Muslims by the Chinese, were constantly fed by the alienation between the two communities as reflected in contemptuous name calling, vicious storytelling, and eventually in pogrom-style onslaughts, when the opportunity or a pretext presented itself. One may try to trace the origin of the anti-Muslim sentiment to the times of the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) when Muslims from Central and Western Asia were brought *en masse* by the Mongols as a sort of civil service that was imposed at the top of Chinese society. Understandably, the Chinese must have identified Muslims (Saracens in medieval parlance) with their conquerors and oppressors. Marco Polo had recorded:

> All the Cathaians detested the Great Khan's rule because he set over them governors who were Tatars, and still more frequently Saracens, and these they could not endure, for they were treated by them as slaves. You see, the great Khan had not succeeded to the dominion of Cathay by hereditary right but held it by conquest; and thus, having no confidence in the natives, he put all authority in the hands of Tatars, Saracens, and Christians, who

[5] L.V. Sodestrom, "The Mohammedan Woman in China", *Moslem World,* IV, 1914, pp. 79-80.

> were attached to his household and devoted to his service, and were themselves foreigners in Cathay.[6]

The Chinese hatred towards the Muslims must have been reinforced by the fact that the latter were assigned special sections in the cities where they settled and enjoyed virtual extra-territorial privileges. Ibn Battuta, who visited China in 1342, recorded that the dissonance between the Muslim quarters in the cities and the Chinese sections was so great that "the markets in the Muslim sections are similar to those in Muslim lands. In the cities there are mosques and *muezzins* (prayer announcers), we heard them calling for prayer".[7] Deep-seated hatred, once thoroughly established, tended to become self-perpetuating and self-justifying and generated a gross misjudgment of the Muslim community by way of stereotype and rationalization. The situation was not unlike the fantastic stories circulated among the Chinese about Westerners during and subsequent to the Opium War[8]. In the latter case, hostility towards Christianity and missionary work in China was, to a large extent, a result of popular resentment towards the West and the different style of life that the Europeans developed in Treaty Ports.

The Muslims were credited by the Chinese with courage, energy, and enterprise, and were said to be persuasive in talk and skillful in flattery, but they were maligned for being shrewd and too sly to be dependable in business. The proverb goes: "Eat the food of a Muslim but do not listen his talk",[9] meaning: "take what he offers but do not believe what he promises". Another popular saying: "Ten Beijing slippery ones cannot talk down one Tianjin brawler; ten Tianjin brawlers cannot talk down a Muslim".[10] The Chinese talked about the Muslims the way the English talk about the Irish and anti-Semites about the Jews. So, even admirable qualities inherent in their culture were deprecated. Courage and energy were said to be channeled to evil ends; shrewdness was interpreted as slyness; and persuasive talking was seen as flattery. Even the proverbial

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[6] Marco Polo, *Travels,* J. Murray, London, 1871, p. 153.
[7] Sanguinetti B.R. and Defremery, C., *Les Voyages d'Ibn Battuta* (text in Arabic and French), Paris, 1922, Vol. IV, p. 285
[8] Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate,* Berkeley, 1967, pp. 55-6. See also R. Israeli, *Dabry de Thiersant and the Opening of China by the French,* Lambert, Saarbrucken, 2011, p. 64.
[9] Owen Lattimore, *The Desert Road to Turkestan*, Methuen, London, 1928, p. 208
[10] Marshall Broomhall*, Islam in China: A Neglected Problem*, Morgan and Scott, London, 1910, pp. 224-5

cleanliness of the Muslims, attested to by many observers,[11] to the extent that a missionary dubbed them "The Clean Sect of China",[12] was brushed aside and interpreted as "another way of life" rather than a characteristic with an intrinsic value. "Of course", the Chinese would say, "his house is cleaner than mine, he is a Muslim".[13]

The fashion in which the Chinese addressed Muslims, or referred to them, is another interesting facet of the relationship between the majority Han and the minority Hui people. There were both "neutral" as opposed to polite and overtly contemptuous references, the one being used generally in the presence of Muslims, the other in their absence. Honorable addresses were hardly ever used. The common term by which Muslims were traditionally known in China, from the Yuan on, was *Hui* or *Hui Hu*i, and the religion was referred to as *Hui Jiao* (the Hui Teaching). There are various theories regarding the origin of these terms, some more fantastic than others.[14] Suffice it to say that this term did not refer exclusively to Muslims, but to Jews and some Christians as well.[15] Deviations from these standard terms by the Chinese ranged all the way from other demeaning diminutives to contemptuous nicknames, even to slanderous insults, especially when they attached the dog radical to the term Hui when the Muslims were in rebellion against the ruler. The diminutive *Hui-zi* is not exactly a respectful reference, unlike *Lao-Hui* which one could use if one wished to show respect. The Chinese also termed Islam *Xiao Jiao* (literally small religion, as a derogatory designation), as opposed to the big religion (*Da-jiao)* that the Chinese assigned to themselves only to indicate that they were NOT Muslims. Another way of setting Islam apart was to refer to it as *jie jiao* (the Faith Apart, or the Different Faith), to set it apart from the Chinese mainstream.[16]

It is evident that Chinese Muslims were prone to be insulted by most of these references, and therefore adopted the formal appellation of *Qing Zhen Jiao (*the Pure and True Religion*)* which is inscribed over the

[11] S. Gamble, *Peking: A Social Survey,* Doran, New York, 1921, p. 373
[12] Broomhall, pp. 224-5
[13] Lattimore, p. 201.
[14] See Broomhall, Chap 10; and E. Bretschneider, "Notes on Chinese Medieval Travelers in the West", in *Chinese Recorder* V and VI, 1874-5
[15] A.C. Moule, "Matteo Ricci and the Jews of Kai-feng", in W.C. White (ed.), *Chinese Jews: A Compilation of Matters Relating to Jews of Kai-feng -fu,* Paragon, New York, 1966, p. 33.
[16] Lattimore, p. 203.

entrance gates of the mosques and used in communication between Muslims. This term, like much of the Muslim liturgical terminology, was apparently borrowed from Chinese Jews.[17] But if Muslims found some consolation and self-confidence in this term they had to suffer the most offending and vicious addresses which harped upon the awkward subject of the abhorred pig. The Chinese, who knew perfectly well how abominable the pig was for the Muslims, elected to taunt them in this fashion, although they usually refrained from resorting to these extremes in the presence of Hui people. The most common insults of this sort were: *ping-zui* (vase-mouth), i.e. the shape of a hoggish snout; *xiao i-ba* (Little tail), meaning the pig's tail; *zhu-wa* (baby-pig); and *xiao zhu-dan* (little pig's egg).[18] It is interesting to note that the Chinese did not usually resort to the swine when swearing at each other. The use of the pig was mostly reserved for Muslims, where they hurt most, and some Chinese even found a rationale for that, blasphemously claiming that this was the Muslims' holy animal, or their God.[19]

All this hatred and hostility was of course constantly fed by the ever-present gap between the two groups. Religion in China was closely intertwined with intellectual life and with the political and social institutions of the nation. Confucianism was identified with scholarship, deeply entrenched in the habits of thought, affections and loyalties of the educated elites. The state was committed to the existing faiths, especially Confucianism. Confucian classics were the basis for education and for the examination system. Ceremonies were associated with Confucianism and maintained at public expense. Officials, including the Emperor, performed many of the duties usually assigned to the priesthood in other cultures. The very political theory on which the State rested derived its authority from Confucian teachings. Religion also formed part of the village life. Temples were maintained by villages, and festivals and ceremonies took place through general contribution. Guilds had patron Gods and other religious features: above all the family, the strongest social unit, had as an integral part of its structure the honoring of ancestors (in the ancestor worship), by rites that were religious in origin and retained a religious significance.[20]

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[17] White, p. 24.
[18] Lattimore, p. 203
[19] Ibid. p. 206.
[20] Kenneth Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China,* MacMillan, New York, 1929, p. 8.

Muslims were out of place in this setting, since their social and religious norms were vastly different and could not displace the already well-entrenched Chinese philosophies and traditions. They went their own ways, in prayers and ceremonies, in their calendars and festivals, in their weddings and burial of the dead, in their socializing and eating habits, in their traveling and dwelling. So, no matter how much Muslims wished to put on an appearance of being Chinese, they were and remained Hui people, that is, non-Chinese in the eyes of the Han majority, with all the prejudices, suspicions and hostility majorities usually entertain towards minorities in their midst.

Although on the intellectual level there were few occasions for friction between the two communities, daily life necessitated contacts and their resulting conflicts. F. Hsu, for example, related the details of a particular ceremony of spirit worship in a Chinese village, in a neighborhood inhabited by a Muslim minority. Since the Chinese wanted to drive away the spirits of dead Muslims, they used to shout at one point: "If despicable Muslims come, give them a segment of the pig's intestine"![21] In that particular village the shouters refrained on that occasion while being observed by the author, from adding this sentence when the party came to a point along the route within hearing range of the Muslims. But the story goes that in past years some bloody fights had occurred between Chinese and Muslims as a result of these insulting words. To put it differently, there was no accommodation to be made between the two communities short of causing injury and triggering rifts.

Chinese Muslims under the Qing felt, for their part, that they were alien people, more akin to other members of the Muslim world community, the *Umma,* than to their Chinese neighbors. *Because Islam infused* their lives from a foreign turf, and this separate identity directed them towards other Muslims worldwide, the deeply ingrained Chinese tradition of identification with the locus of domicile did not pertain to them. The specific congregation to which every Muslim belonged had for each a functional and temporary quality, not the immutable intrinsic value that the average Chinese felt for his village, county and province. For the Chinese, attachment to the locale was the tradition of his ancestors. His life and death in the locale were irrevocably connected with the local spirits whose protection he sought and the geomancy that he could not disturb. This deep identification with the locale was instrumental in the

[21] F. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Kinship, Personality and Social Mobility in China,* Stanford, 1971, p. 197.

development not only of local patriotism (*ai tu*), but also of the spirit of association (*hui*) among the Chinese. Ask any Chinese about his homeland, and he will most probably cite the name of his county or city and province. Chinese originating from the same county or province will find each other when they live or travel outside their homes, within or outside China, and form associations on that basis -*Tongxiang Hui (landsmanschaft)*.

The link between the local and the universal was provided by the learned gentry who had provincial ties as well as local commitments but were at the same time the owners and the manufacturers of the high culture that transcended the locale and encompassed *tian-xia* (everything under Heaven), that is the entire civilized world. Levenson has aptly remarked that "such ties were part of, not rival to, ecumenical Confucianism, trans provincial, or worldly and cosmopolitan. These ties formed part of the personal relationship ambience of Confucianism[22]". Chinese gentry played the double role of local social leaders and also of a trained, skilled, educated and indoctrinated pool of potential officials of the Empire. In both roles the literati were acknowledged as superior men who knew how to manage society, knew the proper rules of conduct and could apply the ethical tenets of Confucianism to both the operation of the state and the affairs of the people. In this capacity, they provided the link between State and society. Thus, the gentry-officials, while serving the Emperor, were at the same time in opposition to him as champions of local interests. Local interests were not only economic, as landlords, but also social as members of local clans and lineages.

Because of the prestige their Confucian training gave them, sanctioned by the state examination system, these officials filled various social functions that reflected their ethical commitment to the system, as *jun-zi*, and their social obligations as members of their clans and leaders of their local communities. They acted as arbitrators in local conflicts, took care of the poor and the weak, organized charity and relief in times of duress, and supervised education. In other words, their state-sponsored Confucian training gave them knowledge of the moral code that was essential for the operation of society, while their function in society provided the state with stability and continuity in local government. It was this balanced tension between the two poles which enabled the hierarchical system to function

[22] J. Levenson, "The Province, The Nation and the World: The Problem of Chinese Identity", in J. Levenson, (ed.) *Modern China: An Interpretive Anthology,* McMIllan*,* London, 1971, pp. 287-8

effectively, and it was precisely this balance that broke down in the relationship between the Confucian state and the Muslim communities in China. The Muslim elite, i.e. the *ahkunds* (or Ahongs, Imams), who managed the spiritual aspects of the Muslim communities in the fields of social welfare, arbitration of disputes and education, were religious figures whose ideology, far from thriving from a symbiotic existence with the state, was in many ways antithetical to it. Their commitment to the community was not ordained by a social status sanctioned by the state, but by an elective office they gained through their Islamic training. Their knowledge of Islam though universal in import was acknowledged only by their local congregation, or at most through their provincial or trans-provincial reputation. Since Chinese Islam, much like the Islamic world of the post-Abbasid period was fragmented and inchoate, no hierarchy was present to make demands on the Chinese Empire, or to impose uniform rules on the Muslim communities throughout the Empire.[23]

No Islamic hierarchy could have been allowed in China by the Confucian state in any case, since any non-Confucian hierarchy existing outside the state was potentially inimical to it, and at any rate being outside the state and independent of it, would be deemed heretical inasmuch as it would undermine the monolithic dominance of the Confucian order. As Lapidus aptly remarked: "While Chinese society was formed by tensions inherent in a hierarchy of institutions, Islamic society was held together by voluntary arrangements consecrated by religious conceptions and prophetic and learned leadership". [24] These different modes of social organization Lapidus attributes to the different cultural styles in the two civilizations, the Chinese having a hierarchical view of the world and society, and the network concept being consistent with the mental world of Islam. This analysis seems to apply in Chinese Islam as well. Indeed, Chinese Muslim society was under the firm control of a non-Islamic central hierarchical system, and unable, under normal circumstances, to establish a central government of its own. Therefore, short of rebellion or secession, Chinese Muslims had no way to express themselves politically within a system with which they could not identify,

[23] Montgomery Watt, *The Majesty that Was Islam,* Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1974, esp. Part III- the Abbasid Decline.

[24] Ira Lapidus, "Hierarchies and Networks: Some relationships Among Community Structures, Elites and Governments in the Ordering of the Qing and of Islamic Societies Compared", in F. Wakeman et al. (eds), *Local Control and Social Protest during the Qing*, Berkeley, 1974.

and whose ideology they could not embrace. Thus, the Chinese Muslim community had to turn its attention to different quarters.

As already mentioned above, the local Muslim community across the Chinese landscape provided the framework for the lives of individual Muslims and the focus of their identity. But at the same time, every Muslim realized that he was part of the universal *Umma*, which had since its inception the dual character of a political as well as a religious organization, through which he could sublimate his political frustration in China and his political aspirations outside of it. Similarly, since the Muslim Hui had no mystical attachment to his locale of domicile, unlike the Han Chinese, he substituted for it Arabia, the holy birth place of the Prophet and *Umma*, as well as other locales of significance to Muslims. Dr. Morrison, a traveler to China at the beginning of the 19th Century, in effect related the following:

> On the evening of September 10, whilst walking on shore at a village called Tu-liao, about 50 miles from Tianjin, I observed written on the lantern of a poor huckster's shop: "A Mohammedan Shop". On stopping to ask the owner, who was an old man, whence he came, he replied: "From *Xiyang* (the Western Ocean)". When urged to say from what country in the West, he said he did not know. He said he understood his family had been in place for several generations.[25]

The old man's family had been there for generations, but **he** had come from the Western Ocean. Owen Lattimore, one century later, encountered the same phenomenon during his travels in Inner Mongolia: "The talk turned to the Mohammedans. Some said that **their** holy city was west of Turkestan. One of them said he had heard the "Turban-Heads" (Muslims) speak of it, they called it Rum (Constantinople turned Istanbul)".[26] In Chinese-Muslim literature since the beginning of the Qing,[27] the centrality of Arabia was a central theme. *Tianfang* (the Celestial Place = Arabia) was its name in Chinese, bringing one Muslim Chinese author of the 17th Century to boast about his ancestry from there and another to entitle his treatise about Islam: *Tianfang Tie li* (Rituals of Arabia).[28] Still another, Ma Nanli, was reported to have written: "Arabia, not China, is the Center

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[25] Dr. Morrison, *An Embassy to Beijing in 1816*, cited in Broomhall, p. 166

[26] Lattimore, p. 56.

[27] Vasili Pavlovich, *Vasilev: Islam in China,* Translated into English by R. Lowenthal, Library of Congress, Washington, 1958, p. 22

[28] Wang Daiyu, *Zhenjiao zhenquan* (Explanations of the True Religion). See A. Vissiere, *Etudes Sino-Mahometanes* Paris, 1911, Vol I p. 106.

of the world [contrary to the Chinese contention that their land was *Zhongguo* (the Middle Kingdom)]. Fuxi, the First Legendary monarch of China was a descendant of Adam who came from the West".[29] The Arabic script, the sacred alphabet of the Holy Qur'an, was by inference referred to as *Tianfang zimu* (Arabia's characters). Since the Muslims in China were under the rule of the heathen, and thus unable to put into practice the political aspects of the ideal of the *Umma,* they faced a dilemma as to how they should conduct themselves. Were they to rebel or to accept the yoke of their rulers? What was the limit of infringements on the boundaries of the *Umma* that they could tolerate? In case the situation became intolerable, to whom should they turn? Should they ignore their frustration and wait for the Great Enterprise that sectarian groups in China had always been expecting? The solutions to these problems were sought in the framework of the universal *Umma*, in terms of the relationships that tie Muslim communities together worldwide, their rights and obligations in the lands of Islam and in foreign lands.

Islam seems always to have had a pragmatic approach to these questions and no clear-cut dogma was worked out as binding at all times in all places. This is understandable since the ideal for Muslims has always been to live under Muslim rule, and indeed Muslim political theory provides comprehensive rules for the functioning of such government. If religious political theory were to lay down rules for contingencies outside the realm of the Muslim state, it would have had thereby implicitly sanctioned such situations, in a world where Islam is the only licit rule (the *Dar al-Islam = Pax Islamica*). Muslim law binds individuals with respect to the Muslim community to which they belong, not to the territory in which they live. But since Muslims live in a certain territory, the law is bound to take into consideration the relation of the territory to the individuals. The law defines the status of the territory with respect to the Muslim community, not the status of the Muslims in relation to the territory. This means that the legal position of a territory would depend on the allegiance of its people to Islam, not on mere proclamations that it belongs to Islam. In this sense, any territory whose inhabitants observe Muslim law, can be included within the definition of the *Pax Islamica.*

In China, for example, in areas where Muslims constituted the majority and Muslim worship was conducted unhindered by the authorities, these domains could be described as part of the *Pax Islamica,* and it was usually convenient for Muslims to accept their status as bearable. However, in

[29] Ibid

periods of extreme tension or conflict, as during the 19th Century when the entire country was thrown into chaos, with rebellions exploding in all parts of the land, then Muslim unrest also became part of the landscape. This meant that Muslims would not tolerate Chinese rule, since they were no longer permitted freedom of worship, thereby throwing off the Chinese yoke and vying for their own Muslim order, or in other words launch an uprising against the dynasty. The conceptual ease with which Muslims in China could veer from obedience to rebellion, depending on their judgment of the situation at any particular time, far from working to the disadvantage of Chinese Muslim communities, on the contrary gave them leeway to work out rationalizations to situations they could do little to reverse in any case. In normal times, when law and order prevailed, and the level of cultural oppression was tolerable, Muslims accepted their fate without much ado. After all, law and order have always been of great concern to Muslim communities, and any ruler was considered better than no ruler at all. Even when Muslim territory was conquered by non-Muslims, the *'ulama*' (scholars of the holy law) often preached obedience to the victor in order to avoid anarchy. For example, when the Mongols swept Syria in 1299, the leading Muslim scholars sent a delegation to the occupying authority in Gaza to seek peace and assurances of security. They saw submission and cooperation with the conqueror as their duty.[30]

If foreign rule was deemed preferable to lawlessness, banditry, and bloodshed, it was all the more so for a Muslim minority which stood to lose most of all in the case of anarchy. Rashid Rida[31] not only recognized the necessity for Muslims to submit to non-Muslim rule but he even sanctioned their participation in wars for their land of domicile provided the war was not waged against other Muslims. The rationale was:

> The Muslim's obedience to his state serves the purpose of defending his own coreligionists against the state's oppression when the state is oppressive, and contributes to their equality with others, in case the state is righteous… It is desirable for the Muslims to participate in all social activities within the state, because a strong and proud state makes them strong and proud too. Islam does not allow its followers to allow weakness

[30] Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Latter Middle Ages*, Harvard, Cambridge, 1967, pp. 131-4.

[31] Rashid Rida (1865-1935), one of the great figures of Islam at the turn of the 20th Century. The cited quotation id from a fatwa (religious verdict) he delivered in response to a Russian Muslim scholar who inquired about the status of Muslim soldiers who were killed during the Russo-Japanese War (!904).

> and degradation over strength and pride, failing which they would fall short of preserving their religion.[32]

In times of disorder, such as those that prevailed in China since the end of the Qianlong era (1736-96), Muslims could come to the conclusion that there was no law and order, and that they had better take measures to protect themselves if nobody else would, since the state had failed to safeguard their freedom to practice their faith unhindered. In such a state of anarchy, Muslims were no longer bound to respect the state laws and regulations, even to the point of rising in rebellion against them. If a Muslim rebellion was successful, even temporarily, then the goal must be a Muslim state, governed by Islamic law. Non–Muslims who live under such a state, could either be pressured to convert to Islam or be tolerated until they succumbed to the Islamic light. While permanently entertaining their deeply ingrained aspirations, Muslims in China went about their daily business, hoping that someday, somehow, somebody would come to restore Islamic law in their neighborhood. To this end, the Muslim community consistently underwent indoctrination on various levels: first, maintaining boundaries separate from the Chinese, by cultivating their sense of superiority[33] and distinctiveness, and encouraging Muslims to remain socially and economically as independent as possible from the environing Chinese society. Second, the Muslims became more devoted members of their community through strong communal organization, inculcating Islamic values, through communal worship and activities, and supporting total and unqualified identification with their fellow Muslims in the congregation, proffering moral submission to the authority of the Imam. Third, the Chinese Muslim was made a conscious member of the world Muslim community, the *Umma.* This was achieved by cultivating the supreme model of the Prophet and his Companions, the centrality of Arabia and of the Muslim Empire, and the crucial weight of Islamic traditions and values in the make-up of each Muslim individual.

The universal link to the *Umma* was maintained through daily prayer in the mosque which was not only part of communal worship but also served as a way of identifying with all Muslims who faced the same *qibla* direction of prayer – Holy Mecca, the place of the inception of Islam and

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[32] *Al-Manar* X, pp. 117-8. Also, in Salah a-Din al-Munajjad, *Fatawa al-Imam Rashid Rida* (Responsa of the Imam Rashid Rida), Vol. II, Beirut, 1970, p. 565.
[33] Shakib Arslan, *Hadir al-'alam al-Islami* (The Present Day Islamic World), Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1971, II, p. 239

conception of its Prophet.[34] Some who could afford the expense joined the pilgrimage to Mecca[35] and participated with the Muslim multitudes in the common rituals that must have generated a feeling of religious exaltation. On the way to and from Mecca, some Chinese Muslims visited Islamic centers such as those in Istanbul and Cairo[36], and upon their return, told their fellow Muslims of the marvels of the Islamic world and of their brethren there. Muslims from Persia, India and Turkey seem to have paid sporadic visits to Muslim communities in China[37]. Some of them, especially scholars, stayed for long periods of time and presumably shared their knowledge with their coreligionists and learned from them. Chinese Muslims also met other Muslims in Asia on their way to the *hajj*. These pilgrims were hosted in mosques in Colombo, Singapore and Hanoi. From Yunnan, Chinese Muslims maintained a permanent correspondence with scholars in Arabia and southeast Asia from whom they sought advice when dealing with interpretation of *Shari'a* law.

A word of caution is nonetheless imperative to counterbalance unavoidable sweeping generalizations when a large diversified Muslim community needed to be described in broad strokes. For example, Chinese Muslims were described as trying to avoid contact with the non - Muslim Chinese population, and to focus their economic and social activities, within their own communities. Yet, many Muslims not only took part in the Chinese system but became prominent members, especially, though not exclusively, in the military and commercial domains. Examples abound: Zheng He, the famous maritime explorer of the Ming, who preceded Columbus by over a century, was Muslim. Many high-ranking Muslim officials ascended the examination system to some of the highest levels of office in Chinese government, as did Ma Xin-I, Governor General of Fujian and Zhejiang in the late Qing. This ambivalent attitude can be explained in terms of the pragmatic approach of Islam to the necessities of life, because Chinese Muslims did not, indeed could not, isolate themselves from a society on which they depended in many

[34] Chan Wing-tsit – *Religious Trends in Modern China*, Columbia Univ, NY, 1953 p. 199

[35] D'Ollone, *Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois*, Paris, 1911 p. 4. The author specified that each year 30 Muslims from Yunnan went to Mecca.

[36] Ma Dexin, one of the initial leaders of the Muslim rebellion in Yunnan is known to have visited Mecca and Istanbul. See Vissiere, p. 113.

[37] See *Voyages d'Ibn Battuta* and also Vasilev, *p. 15.* And Turks from Turkestan who visited Gansu (p. 250), and of Arabs and Turks who came regularly to Sichuan and Yunnan (p.5)

respects. But one might also believe Muslim inroads into the highest positions of power in government, especially in the military which was the paradigm of power, may be a sublimation of their frustration. They could thereby show the Chinese who despised them that they, too, could make it to the top, despite their underprivileged position. Moreover, Muslims in top government positions most likely were esteemed by their coreligionists, and that in itself justified the pursuit of their official careers, gaining influence and were thus able to intervene from within the system on behalf of their fellow Muslims. In the final analysis, they helped protect and preserve Islam rather than turn their back on it. The Holy Qur'an itself justifies such measures: "Good deeds exonerate evil doings".[38]

The record shows that in China many Muslim communities and Muslim individuals had drifted away from their heritage and acculturated more fully to the host culture rather than strictly adhering to the mainstream of Chinese Islam, especially in isolated locations where maintaining one's distinctiveness could become a matter of daily embarrassment and constant nuisance rather than a source of pride and sense of superiority. Thus, we learn of Muslims who practiced ancestor worship and local spirit worship, or adopted Chinese mourning practices, and even of Chinese who still respected some tenets of Islam but had become unaware of their Muslim origins.[39] There are credible missionary accounts about Muslims who would gather to listen to Christian preaching finding similarities between their faith and Christianity, a scenario unheard of in the lands of Islam, and conversely missionaries who were hustled out of Muslim regions in China where they attempted to evangelize, when these communities were heavily populated by a self-confident, assertive Muslim population.[40] These disparate phenomena were due to the organizational fragmentation of Chinese Islam and the absence of a supra communal, and certainly trans-provincial authority that could look after the needs of small and isolated congregations and save them from extinction. For, as Skinner has remarked: "the greater the number of individuals who carry a species of culture, the greater its chance of survival".[41]

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[38] Sura 11, verse 114/115

[39] Dawood Ting, "Islamic Culture in China", in K. Morgan (ed.), *Islam: The Straight Path,* Ronald Press, New York, 1958, p. 369; and Peter Gowing, "Islam in Taiwan", *in Southeast Asia Journal of Theology, XI, 1969*

[40] G. Parker, "Notes on Northern Gansu", in *China's Millions*, No 103, 1884, p. 2.

[41] B.F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, Bantam, NY 1972, p. 123.

The Christian missionaries who operated in China, especially following the Opium War when their presence was vastly expanded and given an official imprimatur, had had some experience in the Islamic world and many of them had been instructed in Islam about which they knew a great deal, in contrast with Chinese Confucian culture about which they had to learn from scratch. Therefore, while attempting to spread their activities among the Chinese, who were their main targets, and when they happened to run into local Muslims whose culture and religion they believed they understood as well as their Islamic *weltanschauung,* they also became interested in studying and understanding that brand of Islam. Gradually, as they came to grasp the plight of Muslims in China, it dawned on them, through trial and error, that the Hui were doubly marginalized, first by the Han Chinese themselves and secondly by the forced presence of the foreign powers which were scrambling for privileges while seeking to increase their areas of domination under gunboat diplomacy and their expanding Treaty Ports. Christian missionaries perceived this situation as an opportunity for expanding their activity, since they thought that the discontented Muslims would welcome an alliance with them under their protective wings, as a way to disengage from the oppression of the Han.

CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTIANS ON MISSION IN CHINA AND OTHER FOREIGN LANDS

In classic missionary historiography, the missionaries and their accounts are represented as heroic tales of zealous, devoted and selfless pious souls who set out to answer the call formulated in the Gospel of Matthew: "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commended you".[1] However, until recently, little has been written about the responses of prospective converts to the spiritual onslaughts from Christian missionaries, gentle and soothing, and sometimes even beneficial as they may have been, on the Muslim population's long-held beliefs, cultures and traditions. To some extent, the reports submitted by the missionaries reflected the riders' thinking and not the horses'. In some way it was a replica of the adage that history is written by the victors while the vanquished, busy licking their wounds, are seldom consulted. The emerging picture has been that of a boxing match in which only the punches of the favorite boxer were recorded and reported, while the losing party remained shrouded in the silence of his humiliating defeat. However, the object of these missionary efforts sometimes refuted the evangelization process, defending himself and his values which were under attack, yet those responses were seldom recorded, for it was unthinkable that Christ's message would be resisted, let alone rejected or counteracted once the prospective convert had begun to "see the light".

Missionaries often conceived of their work, purportedly calculated to bring salvation to the unbeliever from the torments of Hell, in almost military terms. There was talk of "conquering the heathen", of "victory" over ignorance, and these fighters for the cause often dubbed themselves the "soldiers of Christ" or the "salvation army". In many cases, missionaries had no compunction about joining with, or following in the close footsteps of, actual military conquerors who prepared the ground for

[1] Matthew 28:19-20.

this work and protected the missionaries with their military power. If in China, for example, the merchants of Manchester were excited about "adding one inch of their fabrics to the coat-tails of so many millions of Chinese, thereby keeping their textile mills running for many decades", how much more so were the missionaries who were to bring salvation to all those countless multitudes who were "bathing in ignorance". In 19th Century China, converts to Christianity were attracted to the Gospel not only by their desire for salvation but also by the socio-economic privileges that accrued to them under the protective wings of the missionaries, who themselves enjoyed the military protection of their sponsoring countries. However, prior to the arrival of the West in China, in the wake of the Opium Wars (1840-52) Christian missions had been operating there for several centuries. Far from lending prestige or benefits to their rare converts, they had on the contrary, placed them in jeopardy. Missionaries did not fare spectacularly well in either instance, for at the end of an intense century of vigorous activity, coupled with educational and health assistance, welfare and relief, all often enforced by firm organizational and coercive means to the Chinese multitudes, only relatively few Chinese embraced Christianity in all its denominations. To wit, 3-5 million in a country of 500 million, namely never more than one percent, for example, compared to five or more times that many Muslims.

The first Christian missionaries who were permitted to settle in China were the Jesuits, headed by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) under French sponsorship. Then followed the Portuguese who were never allowed to take root in China, remembered as barbarous, brutal and unruly pirates who plundered the coast, taking over Macao in 1557. The Jesuits, by contrast, came as expert mathematicians, who knew how to create friendly relations with the local gentry and how to capture the sympathy of both the elite strata of Chinese society and the Imperial Court. In 1601 Matteo Ricci was permitted to settle in Beijing thereby inaugurating a long period of missionary service in the Court, supervising the calendar, and as experts in mathematics, astronomy, medicine and architecture. Ricci was followed by Schell and Versbiest, both of whom carried out their service tactfully and with ease, avoiding giving offense to any with whom they worked during the transition between the Ming (1368-1644) and the last Manchu Dynasty - the Qing (1644-1911). So much so that in 1692 the Kangxi Emperor issued his famous "Edict of Tolerance" for the Christians in his realm. The Jesuit success led to a scramble among other Christian orders, notably the Franciscans and the Dominicans of Spain in an attempt to emulate them. But since the Jesuits were Portuguese or Italian for the most part, they were not eager to see the arrival of Spanish competitors.

However, as French Jesuits also appeared, matters became more complicated, since France was allied with Spain in Europe, and Spanish missionaries gradually penetrated China. By the mid 17th Century there were some 100,000 Jesuit and some 15,000 Franciscan and Dominican converts.[2]

Unlike other orders, the Jesuits achieved success thanks to their approval of the approach of "self-adaptation". They treated Chinese tradition and culture with enormous tact and respect, uncharacteristic of other Christian missionaries in other parts of the world who were bent on penetrating and altering the cultures they were operating within and against. They themselves adopted a low profile and attempted to look like the Chinese by merging into their Chinese environment. They established a missionary school in Macao where new incoming missionaries were taught Chinese language and literature, and their approach was to the elite on an intellectual basis, rather than an appeal to the masses to convert. Instead of dwelling on the differences between Christianity and the local culture (like Confucianism), something that more aggressive missionaries did elsewhere, they made every effort to show the mutual ethical grounds of both. This approach had an inherent backlash, for if the two were so close why would a devout Confucian be attracted to Christianity? The mendicant orders (Franciscans and Dominicans) seized precisely upon this inconsistency, and so they preached to the masses, via interpreters, with a view to "lifting them from their paganism to the true faith of Christ". They insisted that their converts should abandon their various Chinese creeds and religious practices, for their brand of Christianity was exclusive in its strict interpretation of monotheism. They therefore tended to criticize Chinese religious tenets and even to denigrate Confucianism and its venerated classical masters. Unlike the Jesuits, they emphasized the Crucifixion of Christ, basing themselves on their previous experiences in Latin America and in the Philippines where they had firmly addressed the masses in that antagonistic style and attained large followings, unlike the often-meager achievements of Christianity in China.

No wonder, then, that the two approaches embarked on a collision course, in what came to be known as the "Rite Controversy", which centered on the concept of what was seen as the essential tenets of Christianity. Towards the end of the 17th Century, Pope Innocent XII (the

[2] See for details Kenneth Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China,* Taipei reprint, 1973, pp. 7-11. Much of the following discussion in based on pp. 113-277.

233rd) dispatched his Apostolic Vicar with the rank of Bishop to China in order to resolve the controversy on the spot. The first Papal Special Envoy was Charles Maigrot, who had worked in China for 12 years under the sponsorship of *La Societe des Missions Etrangeres de Paris* which was hostile to the Jesuits. In 1693 he issued a decree which forbade the Jesuits to pursue their attempts to seek monotheistic roots to Confucianism, but the Jesuits as expected, rejected that decree and sent a French Jesuit to Paris to plead for his order's version of the Christian missionary truth. An enormous controversy ensued across Europe, which was to color missionary work in general and in China in particular. In the years to come, the Chinese understandably sided with the Jesuits, who had gotten along with them for over a century, because they felt that they had Sinified those Christians rather than vice-versa, and Emperor Kangxi emphatically rejected the Church's attempt to erase traditional Chinese rituals.

It took until 1715, the year the dominant figure of Louis XIV passed away, that the Vatican, now under Clement XI (Pope the 244th), finally issued its decision supporting the anti-Jesuit approach to missionary work and laid to rest the surrounding controversy and debate, thus marking a withdrawal from the open and liberal approach of the Jesuits. Thereafter, the Jesuits were forbidden from debating the issue any longer, and all missionaries in China were thenceforth forced to take an oath of allegiance to the Pope's decree that was reinforced in 1742 by the 248th Pope, Benedict XIV. That decision generated a decline in the impact Christianity had made in China, as the Emperor ordered all Chinese converts to return to their previous faith and banned all missionaries from China, unless they abided by Ricci's ways and were specifically permitted to stay. Under the Yongzhen Emperor who followed (1724-1736), Christianity was declared heterodox, namely undesirable just like a secret society or a sectarian movement, and therefore subject to persecution and elimination, driving most missions underground, and the missionaries who were caught were exiled back to Macao. In 1784-5, under the Qianlong Emperor (1736-96) persecution of Christians reached a climax when they were suspected of associating with Muslim rebels. That happened when missionaries were attempting to launch their first contacts with Muslims in China, both being alien and feeling estranged from the prevailing Han culture, but in that era of unrest which began brewing towards the turn of the 19th Century, the Qing authorities could not understand that *rapprochement* as anything but a ganging up of two heterodoxies against the ruling order.

In the beginning of the 19th Century some Protestant missionaries entered China, but their work was, for the most part, scholarly, educational

and welfare-oriented. They achieved little in terms of evangelization widening the circle of Chinese converts. They and their Catholic counterparts were now imbued not only with the message of the Gospel but with the general spirit of the colonizing *mission civilisatrice* of that era, which they were convinced must be imposed, by force if necessary, upon the heathen Chinese. Thus, their humanism did not prevent them from encouraging western inroads into China or from enjoying the privileges of the Unequal Treaties under the protection of the Treaty Ports and the advantages deriving from them. Nor were they reluctant to place their missions under the flags of their countries and the gunboats they provided. Moreover, in the wake of the Opium War and the ensuing Treaties of Nanjing and Tianjin, many privileges were accorded to the new Christian converts: the poor benefited from the missionary relief organizations; persecuted individuals, even wanted rebels and criminals, were hidden and protected by missionaries; and converts who took their fellow Chinese to court were assured of missionary and western intervention in their favor. It stands to reason that many Chinese converted out of fear of Europeans, others from their own authorities, or from the necessity of seeking food and shelter, running away from their own misdeeds, yearning for a favored status, or simply for the sake of acquiring a sense of belonging, thus giving order to their lives in the prevailing chaos of the Middle Kingdom at the dawn of the 19th Century.

But between Catholics and Protestants, inter-Christian controversies persisted. The latter accused the former of exaggerated tolerance in their accommodation of Chinese traditions instead of trying to challenge and eradicate them. Debates and arguments regarding translation of key concepts, such as God and Heaven, were reminiscent of the 17th and 18th Century rite controversies. Thus, different translations of the Bible into Chinese appeared, to be distributed by each denomination according to its belief and style of evangelization. The Catholics, despite Pope Benedict XIV's Edict of 1742, remained open to Chinese culture and sensitivities as inaugurated by the Jesuits, allowing many of their converts to conform to their old family traditions, including ancestor worship, which was at the heart of Confucian ritual. Let us exemplify the saga of missionary activity in China with a few episodes of the French missionaries who were for a long while the preponderant group bent on evangelizing the Chinese.

French interest in China began in the 17th Century, together with the rise of French hegemony in Europe, following the decline of the Spaniards and Portuguese. Already in 1658, a French Apostolic Vicar had been appointed over Nanjing, a position equivalent to one of Bishop in the

Church's hierarchy, the difference being that while bishops nominally ruled in their own names, the vicars ruled in the name of the Pope, i.e. they were under the direct jurisdiction of the Vatican, not of their countries of service. According to Latourette,[3] this special status of vicars had been preferred over regular bishoprics already at the time of the Portuguese preponderance in the East, because the Vatican had been reluctant to recognize the decaying Portuguese monarchy to dominate the expanding missions in China, since such control would have crippled their growth. In 1663 a group of French associates and agents of the Apostolic Vicar obtained permission to open a seminary for the "conversion of Infidels in foreign states", which gave birth to the *Societe des Missions Etrangeres* that was to play a crucial role in the activities of the Catholic Church in the Far East. Wrote Latourette:

> It was a society of secular, not regular, clergy, with a seminary in Paris as a training school of its missionaries and the home nucleus of its activities. Its goal was to carry the Christian message to non-Christians, the building of native churches [in foreign lands] and the training of a native secular clergy which in time would be capable of self-maintenance. It was believed that the emergence of a parochial system and of a hierarchy like that in the old Roman Catholic lands, and the transfer of control to native leaders would be easier than when the missionaries were members of great and dominating orders.[4]

After the dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1773, which since the days of Francis Xavier had maintained in China 456 members, consisting of both European and Chinese,[5] the French ex-Jesuits who had remained in the service of the Qianlong Court, asked the French government for help, which resulted in the taking over of the China Mission by the Lazarists in 1784. At the end of the Napoleonic era, there were two French Lazarists in Hubei, while in other provinces where there were some Christians, Chinese clergy were entrusted to care for them. Thereafter, the *Societe des Missions Etrangeres* was revived under Louis XVIII, and in 1822 the *Societe pour la Propagation de la Foi* was inaugurated in France to serve abroad, *inter alia* in China. Following the 1842 Nanjing settlement, the French government which had become the champion of Catholic missions in the East, attempted to obtain the same position in China. The French *charge d'affaires*, Lagrene, asked that a toleration clause of the Catholics be included in the Treaties, and he obtained two Imperial Edicts to serve

[3] Latourette, pp. 113-4
[4] Ibid. 114-5.
[5] Ibid 167.