

GLOBAL
ENTANGLEMENTS
OF A MAN WHO
NEVER TRAVELED

*A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian
and His Conflicted Worlds*

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INTRODUCTION

Situating Zhu Zongyuan

A SEDENTARY BUT CONNECTED EXISTENCE

In terms of his personal travels, Zhu Zongyuan led a rather ordinary life. Born around 1616 into a low-level literati family in the southern Chinese port city of Ningbo, he never departed from the core regions of his state. In fact, there is no indication that he ever left his home province of Zhejiang in southeastern China. Zhu's home-based existence contrasts sharply with that of many contemporaries with more mobile biographies. During the seventeenth century and even before, distant travelers—traders, mercenaries, missionaries, advisers, and slaves—were not an unusual sight in many parts of the world. People who had crossed continents and oceans were common in the port cities of a world increasingly connected through long-distance trade. Chinese merchants, adventurers, and workers took part in this globalizing trade, often playing important roles in international economic hubs such as Nagasaki, Manila, Malacca, or even Goa.¹ Zhu Zongyuan was not among them—although, as we shall see, he did not have a quiet and uneventful life.

Nevertheless, Zhu's connections to the outside world were somewhat unusual for Chinese society at this time, sufficiently so to make it worthwhile to view his life and work through both local and global historical lenses. It was Zhu's involvement with globalizing Catholicism that brought him into close contact with a foreign religious and

institutional scholarly world. Far more than most members of his peer group, the regional elites in late Ming and early Qing China, Zhu was in contact with Europeans—mainly Jesuits but also some Dominican missionaries. Occasionally Zhu even used a Christian name, Cosmas, and his house seems to have figured as an important base for the dispersed Christian community in Ningbo and surrounding regions.

The vast majority of his peer group, local elites, were not in such close contact with people from a distant land. Neither did they adhere to a teaching that had been brought over to China from afar just a few decades earlier. While Zhu may not have cared to gain a comprehensive understanding of society and religion in the distant West, he nevertheless participated in liturgies and masses whose different cultural context was obvious. He conversed with Jesuit missionaries who had clearly arrived in China from a distant land, and he was at least basically familiar with their versions of science and philosophical traditions. Moreover, he operated with a wealth of Christian concepts and biblical stories that were obviously rooted in a different cultural nexus. As a small but telling example, like many other pro-Christian texts, Zhu's works also identify the far-off land of *rudeya* (Judea) as the site of Jesus's birth. Even a decidedly localized presentation of Christianity could not brush over the fact that the Holy Land was not in China. Moreover, Zhu had seen the Jesuit world maps and their brief, selective descriptions of the world's continents. We know he had heard of the arrival of new powers in the greater East Asia region, since his works allude to the Spanish colonial presence in the Philippines.

Zhu Zongyuan became intellectually engaged with Christianity: he was a prolific reader of the wealth of pro-Christian books and pamphlets published in Chinese around his lifetime. Their contents ranged from introductions of Christianity to annotated world maps and scientific works based on European approaches. Zhu even joined the thin ranks of Chinese Christian authors during the seventeenth century. He left behind two monographs and several other texts in which he presented his faith to a wider Chinese audience by relating it to aspects of Chinese tradition. He also offered extensive reflections on the foreign origins of Christianity as well as their implications for Chinese society and traditions. Zhu's writings display a close familiarity

with Chinese history and thought, particularly with the official Confucian canon of learning. This is hardly surprising since around the age of thirty he successfully passed the provincial state examinations, an achievement that would have been impossible without many years of intensive Confucian studies.

As an author, Zhu thus did not merely cover subjects that are typically regarded as parts of Chinese intellectual and spiritual traditions. He not only narrated biblical contents but also referred to a wide array of other subjects ranging from early modern European geography to ancient Greek philosophy. When working through all these fields, our Ningbo Christian was not driven by the objective of unfolding exotic curiosities of a distant world for his readers. On the contrary, Zhu—or Cosmas—pursued the ultimate goal of demonstrating that Christianity was worth the attention of his fellow scholars and other members of Chinese society. He did so chiefly by arguing that his new teaching, which in Chinese was translated as *tianxue*, or “Learning of Heaven,” was not only compatible with the Confucian tradition but also a way of returning to its pristine origins. In this context, he dealt with a number of intellectual challenges, including the question of whether Confucian values were intrinsically tied to Chinese society or could be seen as universal values.

It would be misleading to assume that Zhu’s ultimate agenda was a cross-cultural synthesis that would be achieved through “dialogues between civilizations.” Modes of thought that differentiated the world into various civilizations were much less common in the 1600s than in the 1800s or 1900s.² Certainly, cultural identities were not completely absent during Zhu Zongyuan’s lifetime—for instance, in the growing string of global trading centers ranging from Goa to Malacca one can find many examples of individuals and groups who defined themselves as members of one particular culture within a pluriverse of religions and traditions.³ Yet people were far from categorizing the world into fixed civilizational realms characterized by unceasing differences.

Ideas of this kind did not fill Zhu Zongyuan’s mind. He did not identify himself as a Chinese citizen in the modern sense, as a Confucian in a representative sense, or as a Catholic in an exclusive sense. Rather,

like many Chinese and European scholars of his time, his worldview boiled down to a monocivilizational vision. At least with regard to the crucial problem of defining a good and purposeful life, he believed that ultimately only a single universal teaching would be able to better the conditions of his own society and the world at large. One might argue that such an attitude hardly differentiated Zhu from people who believed in the cultural superiority of China. Yet what separated Zhu's idea of a civilizational singular from some conservative Confucian circles in his home society was his belief in the necessity of looking outward.

While Zhu Zongyuan's close association with Christianity was somewhat out of the ordinary in seventeenth-century Chinese society and intellectual life, it would be going too far to understand him as a uniquely "cosmopolitan" figure in an otherwise inward-looking kingdom. Over the past few decades, historical research has further revised images of imperial China as an isolated land hidden behind great walls made of stone and cultural haughtiness.⁴ Such stereotyped, disparaging visions of the Chinese past became influential in the nineteenth century and onward—a time when Western domination and the spirit of progressivism fostered certain types of world historical narratives that were based on strong value judgments about non-Western cultures.⁵ For the study of early modern Sino-European relations this meant that at least implicitly the juxtaposition of a dynamic West with a stagnant and somewhat passive Middle Kingdom framed a large part of research literature in the field.

Yet Zhu's China was neither stagnant nor introverted. Even during the epochal crisis of the 1600s, the Ming or Qing state remained the largest economy on the planet, and in the eyes of scholars like Andre Gunder Frank it was even the center of a world economic system.⁶ With its estimated one hundred forty million inhabitants at the middle of the seventeenth century, China was more populous than Europe as a whole with its roughly one hundred million people. All this implied not only a wealth of global trade connections but also of people, technologies, and ideas between China and other parts of the world.

This has great implications for the ways in which we define the larger historical contexts of Chinese Christians like Zhu Zongyuan.

There is no reason to assume that during the seventeenth century, Sino-Western relations were more intense than, for instance, connections between China and South Asia. Clearly, by the time of Zhu's life, Chinese state-led discoveries and the foundation of outposts in lands as far as Africa had already been over for two centuries. Nevertheless, despite significant state restrictions on international trade and official immigration, large numbers of Chinese individuals ventured overseas every year. What is more, foreigners from many different societies were not unusual sights in many parts of the Chinese world—and not just in port cities. Also in subtler ways, the early globalization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was visible in much of Chinese society. Just one example is the biological exchanges of that time: American crops like the sweet potato came to China and were now transforming people's lives.⁷ Although most people were probably unaware of the precise origins of these crops, they usually knew that they had been imported from outside.

Taking a closer look at Zhu Zongyuan's social circles, it would be wrong also to suppose that low-level scholars and officials during the late Ming and early Qing were more or less oblivious of distant lands and the growing webs between these lands and China. In fact, studies of Chinese libraries and the general book market during the early 1600s suggest that there was a high degree of interest in the outside world, at least among the educated. Annotated world maps produced by Jesuit missionaries in China sold well and were often reprinted, or integrated, into other geographical works published in East Asia.⁸ Likewise, in the realm of religions, faith systems, and spiritual teachings, the China of Zhu Zongyuan was not a solipsistic cultural universe. Along with Christianity, Islam enjoyed a clear presence in some Chinese cities, with mosques visible in Chinese cities ranging from Beijing to Hangzhou. Because of its strong role along Central Asian trading routes, Islam could even look back at a more uninterrupted history in China than Christianity. For example, the oldest Muslim prayer hall in Beijing, Cow Street Mosque, which had been founded in the year 966, was operating during Ming times and after.⁹

In addition to these monotheistic religions that had their organizational and spiritual centers clearly outside China, other teachings of

foreign origin had a strong position there. Buddhism, present in China from the early first millennium, had long played an important role, and though over the centuries it had experienced waves of persecutions and constraints, it was nevertheless an integral part of China's cultural fabric.¹⁰ But its Indian origins had not been forgotten, and during the early 1600s a number of influential opponents of Buddhism again began to emphasize the fact that the Buddha was from a society outside the lands of Confucius. Some critics of Buddhism were especially concerned about its strong position within many Confucian circles.

Other, more marginal faith systems of foreign origin, including Christianity, also had the possibility to prosper during the first half of the seventeenth century. During the calamities of that time that eventually culminated in the collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1644, state administrations were often dysfunctional and living conditions grew extremely uncertain. The overall political instability meant that state control was loosening, allowing Christian missionaries and publications to flow more freely through Chinese cities, towns, and villages. Moreover, the general crisis created an age of anxiety and uncertainty that made many individuals look for new sources of confidence and hope.¹¹ While this mood affected all parts of society, there were also changes more specific to elite circles that aided the spread of new religions. For instance, many learned individuals began to identify less with the state and official orthodoxies and increasingly turned toward other teachings.

While Christianity was not widespread on Chinese soil when the first Jesuit missionaries arrived in the late sixteenth century, by the 1630s about forty to seventy thousand converts were living in China.¹² These numbers are only rough indicators, due to the shaky evidence of primary source materials and the difficulty of defining a convert in a society in which religious pluralism and syncretism were common. What remains certain is that Jesuit and, later, other missionaries managed to establish sizable Catholic communities in both the countryside and urban areas. Some of their missionary efforts aimed high, to the upper levels of Chinese society, and here they were not without success. The first generation of Chinese converts included a few

high-ranking scholar-officials like Xu Guangqi (1562–1633) and Yang Tingyun (1557–1627), who belonged to the late Ming upper crust.

Zhu Zongyuan, who lived one or two generations later, did not have the same social standing as such exalted figures as Xu and Yang.¹³ Nonetheless, his family background, education level, and success in the provincial examinations distinguished him from the vast majority of Chinese converts, who belonged to much lower sections of society—in other words, Zhu was part of elite circles, but at the provincial level. His intellectual skills allowed him to read in a wide variety of genres typical of the late Ming book market, including translations of European works and newly authored texts about Christianity. They also gave him the opportunity to be a writer and to communicate regularly with Jesuit fathers across various provinces. Zhu served as a connector not only between his local Catholic community and other Chinese Christian groups but also between European missionary networks and his local circles in late Ming society.

While Zhu functioned as a bridge builder in various regards, it would be problematic to describe his activities as contributing to an exchange between China and Europe at large. His advocacy of the Learning of Heaven certainly did not amount to any broad-based Europeanization program, which would become more common in China from the late nineteenth century onward. During the 1600s, Europe was not seen as an economic, political, and cultural might that would force China to change. Indeed, the European powers were not major factors determining the fate of seventeenth-century China. While the long decline of the Ming dynasty and the subsequent expansion of Manchu rule put the Chinese state under heavy strains, the political, economic, and cultural fundamentals of China were not in danger of collapsing. Enough of the old order remained intact that the dynastic transition crisis was experienced largely as caused by home-grown woes.¹⁴ One did not conceptualize them as outcomes of China's global entanglements.¹⁵

Undeniably, the arrival of Iberian and, later, other European forces, including corporations with territorial ambitions like the English East India Company, had caused visible changes in some Asian regions.¹⁶

Even territorial colonization such as in the Philippines, an archipelago in the former backwaters of Asian trade, existed in some parts of East Asia.¹⁷ Additionally, the Portuguese had taken direct control of an entire string of places like Hormuz, Goa, and Malacca, and they sought to establish an Indian Ocean-wide passport system.¹⁸ Yet after an initial shock to historically rooted trading networks, Chinese and other Asian merchants found ways to either arm themselves or circumvent Portuguese zones, forcing the latter to take a more collaborative approach with regional players. With the exception of the Philippines, European “empires” in Asia amounted to not much more than a string of strongholds in heavily contested waters. In other words, powers like the Portuguese more or less tapped into already existing Chinese, Indian, Muslim, and other networks, many of which remained powerful for centuries to come.¹⁹ These developments hardly seemed to matter to the mighty Ming state, especially since its administration did not put much emphasis on oceanic trade.

Also, outside the relatively modest influence of its early modern empires, Europe did not enter the stage as a coherent force in China or elsewhere in Asia. Individual powers like Spain and Portugal, as well as some other countries later on, could perceive one another as competitors in Asia.²⁰ What is more, the contenders for the lucrative Asian trade routes were far from being segregated into European and Asian camps, or along religious lines.²¹ Instead, the commercial and partly military competition over strategic points was an ever-changing pattern of coalitions among such diverse parties as, for instance, Iberian forces and Muslim sultanates. Just as Christian states were engaged in fierce wars with one another, the relationships among Muslim empires such as the Ottomans, the Safavids, or the Mughals were often characterized by bitter enmity.²² The same was the case with maritime Islamic empires such as the Sumatra-based Acehese sultanate, which—with changing allies—expanded its rule and influence along the eastern Indian Ocean shores throughout much of the seventeenth century.²³ We can observe similar patterns among the diverse networks of traders. Further, in the worlds of barter and gain, Chinese, Islamic, European, and other merchant groups formed ever-changing pacts. At times Chinese and European forces formed coalitions against other

Europeans, and while Portuguese forces relied on local Asian aides and auxiliary forces, several thousand Portuguese mercenaries were in service of various Asian states during the 1620s.²⁴

Even in terms of religious alliances and allegiances, Europe was not a clearly identifiable agent—not even in a specific missionary theater like China. During the seventeenth century, frictions among Catholic missionaries were clearly visible in East Asia, both in the form of antagonisms between different Catholic orders and significant disparities among members of the Society of Jesus. In various agreements with the Holy See, the Portuguese crown had secured far-reaching powers over ecclesiastical matters in all its overseas territories, and it had done so largely by the early 1500s.²⁵ Yet with the arrival of other European powers, this system—the *padroado*—did not result in a Portuguese monopoly over all Asia missions. In fact, Catholic priests operating under the Portuguese *padroado* and those with ties to other parts of Europe often clashed, as they did in the rivalry between the French- and the Portuguese-ordained missions that began heating up toward the end of Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime. Divisions of this kind could also extend into the relations between the Jesuits and their Chinese supporters. For example, in the struggles during the Chinese Rites Controversy over the acceptability of ancestor worship, different groups of European missionaries and Chinese converts would experience one another as opponents.²⁶

All this suggests that we should not rush to conceptualize the specific world in which Zhu Zongyuan lived as an encounter zone between two clearly divided sides, China and Europe. The interactions framing the history of seventeenth-century Chinese Christianity were too complex to allow for simple bilateral models of this kind. The latter would also not adequately express the worldviews and mental maps of many important agents operating during that epoch. For instance, during the 1600s many Catholic missionaries did not necessarily think of Europe as a coherent civilizational realm, and—unlike many nineteenth- and twentieth-century protagonists—they did not differentiate crudely between the West and the rest. It is telling that some Jesuits likened the mission in Poland and its eastern neighbors to their work in Asian societies,²⁷ or that some fathers regarded the local

populations in Brittany and New France as similarly uncultivated people in need of education and guidance for a better life and faith.²⁸

What are the conceptual alternatives to placing Zhu Zongyuan between China and Europe? We cannot and should not view him from China-centered perspectives either. While he probably never traveled outside his home province, his work and life go beyond a local or Chinese context. He was part of other historical realms reaching beyond the boundaries of the Sinosphere—for example, his life has its place in the history of early modern Catholicism, which, as an institutionalized church and a range of faith systems, experienced tremendous change as it was spread around the world. In a more concrete way, Zhu Zongyuan's vita was closely related to the history of a particular order in the Catholic Church, the *Societas Jesu*. Its members, the Jesuits, were already active on several continents at that point. Even though he never acquired any kind of official membership in the Society of Jesus, Zhu was in close communication and collaboration with Catholic missionaries for most of his life. In many regards he saw himself as someone pursuing a common cause with these fathers and their global networks. Again, however, that did not mean that he compromised his belief in the great values of Chinese civilization, most notably Confucianism.

How, then, to do justice to both the decidedly local dimensions of Zhu Zongyuan's biography and his transcontinental connections? This can best be done when seeking to combine microhistorical and macrohistorical perspectives. In order to make the global dimensions of his very local life more visible, one should not rush to aggrandize the former; we do not need to exaggerate Zhu's global historical significance. We can acknowledge that, in many regards, he was a fairly conventional member of the elite in his native Ningbo. Except for his local responsibilities and his activities as a writer, he did not even play an illustrious role in the Chinese Christian communities of his time. Yet Cosmas Zhu can be regarded as a part of an encounter zone between manifold global and local structures. His writings belonged to two historical contexts, the global Catholic book and the prospering late Ming book market. The version of Christianity propounded in these texts fits into both the worlds of seventeenth-century Catholicism and the landscape of seventeenth-century Confucianism.

Likewise, his local Christian communities were part of a globalizing ecclesiastical organization even as they were deeply rooted in Chinese associational life.

Many facets of Zhu's life and work thus have their place in a variety of overlapping contexts. What is more, they contributed to intertwining these contexts with one another more than he himself could possibly have been aware of during his lifetime. Indeed, it is possible to see Zhu as one of the many points through which large systems like global Catholicism and late Ming China were touching—and shaping—each other. Such large interconnections actually depended on the roles played by rather unassuming individuals like Zhu. At the same time, Zhu and other connectors were not independent agents; rather, they experienced a wealth of pressures and constraints emanating from the encounter between such large power systems as the global Catholic Church and China as a state and society.

EVOLVING RESEARCH LANDSCAPES

Any effort to explicate the complex global and local worlds of Zhu Zongyuan requires drawing on academic literature from a wide range of research areas. Many of the perspectives taken in this book are enabled by already existing work, by the kinds of questions that scholars have asked before about the history of Christianity in China and related themes. Academic work on Chinese Christianity between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries has taken important turns during the past few decades, and the same has happened in the study of wider Sino-European interactions. Generally speaking, historical scholarship has increasingly underlined the importance of Chinese converts in the formation of Chinese Christianity during the late 1500s and after. This was an important development, for until the 1980s many of the most influential studies had portrayed the Jesuits as the main creators of the complex Confucian-Christian synthesis that came to be called the accommodation method. According to this older view, single leading figures in the Jesuit China mission like Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) basically had all the skills needed to make Christianity

compatible with aspects of China's cultural and sociopolitical fabric.²⁹ Many authors basically presupposed that the famous Italian Jesuit and other leading figures in the China mission almost single-handedly created an erudite theoretical framework that drew on various texts ranging from key Confucian books to the Bible and ancient Greek thought.³⁰

This Europe-centered interpretation of late Ming Christianity implicitly reduced the role of the Chinese side to little more than passive recipients of a cross-civilizational package provided to them by the European missionaries. Indeed, according to many perspectives of this kind, China merely provided the stage on which a "generation of giants" of missionaries figured as the main actors.³¹ Ironically, that same idea—that the accommodation method was solely manufactured by European missionaries—is also foundational to decidedly critical accounts of the Jesuit policies in China. A number of scholars who regard the Confucian-Christian synthesis of the late Ming and early Qing periods as a cultural imposition, a hijacking of history, share the notion that the Chinese side had little agency.³²

Yet as a general tendency, scholarship has come to question such interpretative approaches. Many publications in the field now conceptualize the accommodation method not as a Jesuit creation but as the result of intensive interactions between European missionaries and Chinese scholars. Inarguably, most Jesuit missionaries mastered both contemporary and classical Chinese and had a formidable knowledge of Chinese traditions, but many researchers agree that they could not possibly have reached the degree of proficiency necessary to compose books in such elegant Ming prose as those appearing in the Chinese market under their names.³³ Without the active support from Chinese scholars it would have been unfeasible to offer the exegesis of Confucian texts that was necessary to make Christianity at least in principle acceptable to a learned Chinese audience. The Chinese coworkers who made this possible could be either converts or simply underemployed scholars specifically hired for this task.

Presenting the European faith in learned written Chinese was of central importance to the project of showing the links of Christianity with Confucianism. Equally significant was composing pro-Christian

texts in a form that resembled that of Chinese works of a similar genre; simply translating European writings into Mandarin would not have been sufficient or effective. This was even more so as the pro-Christian literature of that time usually depicted the European faith as part of the inner potentials of Confucianism. Such a claim had to be substantiated by a sufficiently sophisticated familiarity with this tradition and the concepts, tropes, and texts foundational to late Ming and early Qing Confucianism. Many Christian publications contained a wealth of references to authoritative Chinese texts, ranging from the ancient Five Classics to commentaries from later dynasties. It appears that even the relevant aspects of European science would appeal to Chinese readers only if they were written in ways that showed a sophisticated knowledge of Chinese culture and textual traditions.³⁴ In many regards, the perspectives from which the history of the accommodation method was written can be likened to those found in the history of European discoveries. Just as the local guides collaborating with the “discoverers,” as well as their native knowledge, had been rendered subaltern, so, too, was the role of Chinese scholars in forging a new Confucian-Christian synthesis.

The increased attention that historians now pay to Chinese collaborators in Jesuit texts is, however, only a small part of a wider transformation in the research landscapes surrounding this field. As a more general trend, there has been a growing interest in the Chinese who were actively engaged in the creation of seventeenth-century Chinese Christianity.³⁵ This shift has been accompanied by a change in the academic communities engaged in this field. The latter was long dominated by theologians, historians of European missions, and other scholars who usually had not mastered the Chinese language.³⁶ Starting in the last quarter of the twentieth century, an increasing number of scholars entering this area of research have been either professional sinologists or scholars with a solid background in Chinese studies.³⁷

These developments in Western academia have been paralleled by transformations in Chinese-language scholarship. While work on the history of Christianity had some prominent representatives (including the Catholic scholar Fang Hao) during the first half of the twentieth century, after Mao took over, the field was blocked or at least heavily

constrained on the Chinese mainland. From the 1980s on, and increasingly during the past few years, universities in the People's Republic have become the sites of growing research activities related to the history of Ming-Qing Christianity,³⁸ which was also now being studied with an eye on scholarship in other countries. As a consequence, a substantial body of literature is now available in Chinese that provides in-depth studies on a wealth of topics, reaching from single Chinese Christians to the varied Sino-European contacts of the period.³⁹ Since only a small minority of historians in China read sources in early modern European languages and Latin, this scholarship focuses chiefly on Chinese texts.

Together, these developments at Chinese, Western, and other universities have produced a wealth of publications based mainly on Chinese primary source materials. This offers a further departure from missionary-centered perspectives and at the same time a more detailed understanding of the locally specific historical contexts of Christianity in seventeenth-century China.⁴⁰ All this means that the Chinese facets of Christianity are no longer predominantly treated as modifications of a European export product. The histories of Chinese converts are now increasingly studied as part of the Chinese rather than the European past. Scholars such as Erik Zürcher, Nicolas Standaert, and David Mungello have paid close attention to the intricate patterns of late Ming and early Qing society, politics, and culture.⁴¹ For instance, they and other researchers became more interested in the parallels and entanglements between the Learning of Heaven and the mushrooming of intellectual schools, political groupings, and religious movements during the crisis of the waning Ming dynasty. Similarly, the study of a whole range of closely related topics, from the history of science to the organization of Chinese Christian communities, has given more weight to local environments as shaping forces. As part of the same process, research has grown more sensitive to regional differences between the varied Chinese Christian communities.⁴²

The growing emphasis on the overall Chinese context also rendered the image of Chinese Christianity during the Ming-Qing period increasingly complex. While before scholars had not paid much attention to the multifaceted character of Chinese Christians, from the

late 1980s onward researchers began to focus on a wider variety of converts. One initially paid much attention to established individuals like the “three pillars of early Chinese Christianity,” the scholar-officials Li Zhizao (1565–1630), Xu Guangqi, and Yang Tingyun, who all held the highest degree awarded in the imperial examination system (*jinshi*).⁴³ More recently, scholars have been drawn to investigating Christianity among other educated Christians and the Chinese peasantry and other social groups lacking access to significant levels of education.⁴⁴ This turn away from the history of famous individuals toward the study of discourses and worldviews more common in broader and lower levels of society was not confined to the study of Chinese Christianity. Rather, the larger fields of intellectual history and the history of religions witnessed their own movements against elite-centered approaches; this meant that the ideas and beliefs of lower social strata began to be taken more seriously within historians’ guildhalls.⁴⁵

In any event, historical scholarship has now grown more attentive to the different milieus and types of Chinese Christianity during the Ming-Qing transition period. As a result of a growing number of research projects in this field, our image of Christianity in China looks far more diversified—and less shaped by the Jesuit missionaries. The growing interest in these complex worlds of faith has led historians (from China and elsewhere) to conceptualize illiterate Chinese converts as cocreators of new forms of Christianity. This is important since, for instance, in many rural convert communities Christian sculptures, symbols, and elements of faith were merged with Buddhist and Daoist practices—something that, given their small numbers, the Jesuit missionaries could not control. Among such social groups, engagements and overlaps with Chinese popular religions had a major influence on Christian practices, as did beliefs in the power of magic, spells, and charms.⁴⁶ This was a world of syncretism far removed from that of the erudite, often exegetical debates about Confucian and Christian concepts among missionaries and Chinese literati.

In addition to rendering our notion of Ming-Qing converts more pluralistic, literature in the field now puts more stress on the varied facets of Jesuit life in China. Recent work dealing chiefly with the

European side of the China mission has put more emphasis on the huge diversities, discrepancies, and even conflict lines in the community of Jesuit fathers based in China.⁴⁷ In addition, some publications have paid similar levels of attention to both the European and Chinese contexts in which individuals such as Matteo Ricci or Giulio Aleni (1582–1649) were operating.⁴⁸ Other studies have highlighted the highly diverse character of Jesuit activities in China, including scientific work, engagements in the Chinese bureaucracy, scholarly collaborations, along with regular liturgical work and occasional practices such as healing through the power of the cross.⁴⁹ Likewise, the social circles in which the members of the Society of Jesus moved were not as carefully selected as the older literature made them seem. True, a few Jesuits like Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666) worked many years at the imperial court, and most missionaries were in regular contact with elite milieus; still, many fathers actually spent most of their time with the lower strata of Chinese society.⁵⁰ This is plausible given that a few dozen Jesuit missionaries in the Ming state had managed to convert tens of thousands of individuals by the 1640s.

The Jesuits' broad variety of social contacts and religious activities in China were actually carryovers from their own native lands. In large parts of Europe, it was common for the same cleric to practice Christianity in very different ways—for example, engaging in learned disputations and conducting exorcisms. In today's world, we would more readily regard such elements as incompatible or even mutually exclusive, but in seventeenth-century Europe high culture and low culture were not as sharply divided.⁵¹ This was compatible with the spiritual landscape of contemporary China, where highly learned scholars often engaged in ritual forms that centuries later would be classified as "superstitious."⁵²

In any case, the transmission channels and contact zones of the China mission went far beyond bookish conversations among well-read men. Two very complex and pluralistic worlds were meeting each other, leading to an ever-changing wealth of new interpretations, syncretisms, and creative tensions.⁵³ The Learning of Heaven could take many shapes, and much depended on individual Chinese converts and European missionaries as well as their social backgrounds,

their personal networks, local communities, and ultimately their specific religious interpretations.

QUESTIONS, LENSES, AND PERSPECTIVES

This book takes one individual, Zhu Zongyuan, as a vantage point to look into the rich worlds of Christianity in seventeenth-century China and its varied contexts. As the book shows, the global and local environs in Zhu's biography are not neatly separated into discrete parts; rather, they are entwined with one another in a complex pattern. On the one hand, local Chinese life during the late Ming and early Qing period was affected by exogenous forces, even outside port cities and trading hubs like Ningbo. On the other, the worldwide dynamics of the seventeenth century were not formed by detached global processes but were a composite of many interwoven local histories.⁵⁴ Because of that, it is possible—even desirable—to examine the lives of individuals like Zhu Zongyuan not through only any one of the lenses of local history, regional history, and global history but through the three combined. To be sure, these levels of analysis are often closely connected: in fact, combinations of local and translocal perspectives are characteristic of large parts of the current literature associated with the term “global history.” More specifically, there has also been a growing interest in relating fields like microhistory and global history to one another.⁵⁵

No matter what the perspective, not much research has been done on Zhu Zongyuan, and no substantial study of him has been available in English.⁵⁶ Between the 1940s and the 1970s, Fang Hao, an important historian of Chinese Christianity, included Zhu in some reference works,⁵⁷ but little has been written about him in Western languages.⁵⁸ In China, the growing interest in converts during the Ming-Qing period has led to several recent studies on Zhu Zongyuan, including a number of theses or doctoral dissertations⁵⁹ and some articles⁶⁰ dealing with aspects of Zhu's life and work.

Bits and pieces of information about Zhu Zongyuan can be found across a wide range of sources, but together they do not allow for more

than a rough sketch of his life, typically with a few clear patches shining through a murky biographical etching. Hence even if it were the purported goal of this book to provide a biography of Zhu Zongyuan, the relative lack of sources on Zhu's personal and professional life would provide frustratingly insufficient levels of insights into his individual development, his immediate surroundings, and close relationships. It would be even less possible to offer an account of his private hopes and fears, including the more personal reasons for his conversion to the Learning of Heaven.⁶¹

The greater part of this book takes up the main traces Zhu left behind: his writings. As mentioned, Zhu authored two monographs, several shorter pieces, and we also find his name on several introductions to other Christian works. I do not discuss the entire range of subjects covered in his oeuvre, prioritizing instead the parts of his works in which Zhu ruminates on the intellectual challenges emerging from the encounter between a local life and a translocal faith. Among those topics are, for instance, his reflections on the relationship between cultural specificities and ethical universalism and his account of the importance of foreign influences in the history of Chinese civilization.

The following chapters discuss facets of Zhu's life and, above all, his works in various local and translocal contexts. Each chapter takes one aspect of our Ningbo Christian as a starting point to analyze a variety of local and translocal entanglements. This approach permits me to investigate in detail key aspects of the great encounter of two large structures: the globalizing Catholic Church⁶² and the late Ming state and society. The interaction between these large frameworks and their dependent organizations was not necessarily a harmonious one, and the resulting friction could lead to unintended outcomes. Focusing on one particular individual as a nodal point in the complex networks that enclosed seventeenth-century Catholicism allows us, I believe, to become more sensitive to the various power patterns—ideological and institutional—that shaped this encounter. The Learning of Heaven, after all, was not the product solely of intellectual efforts and spiritual quests. Rather, hegemonic claims and institutional

control emanating from different parties were important in its formative period and beyond.

Chapter 1 reconstructs the traces of Zhu Zongyuan's biography from a combination of Chinese and European primary sources. It shows how regional and transregional circuits of exchange affected life in a port city like Zhu Zongyuan's hometown of Ningbo. It also depicts important social and economic transformations that help us better grasp Zhu Zongyuan's specific approach to the Learning of Heaven; among them are the decline of some literati classes and the privatization of Confucian learning in some circles. Partly related to this context, the chapter provides a picture of the epochal crises that framed Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime and culminated in the Manchu conquest of China, showing how, as part of the local elite and a member of a foreign religious organization, Zhu had to carefully navigate the calamities of his time. It becomes clear that in many regards, he was forced to live in a world of conflicting loyalties and irresolvable conflicts.

Chapter 2 demonstrates that conflicted constellations and ongoing battles also characterized aspects of Zhu Zongyuan's life in Catholic communities. The chapter further explores Zhu's various roles as a Christian, many of which were entangled with his life as a Confucian scholar and a member of the upper echelons of Ningbo society. For instance, he was writing Confucian-Christian monographs and serving as a connecting point between his local Christian circles and the European missionaries stationed in many different parts of China. Yet the chapter argues that precisely because Christian life was not—and could not possibly be—strictly separated from Chinese communal and associational life, it was characterized by many inherent contradictions. Both sides of the Chinese-Catholic encounter had to make institutional compromises, and the final product did not always make the Learning of Heaven more acceptable to a Chinese audience. Like other pro-Christian texts, the writings of Zhu Zongyuan (which the chapter discusses in the dual contexts of the late Ming book market and the emerging global Catholic book market) were meant to work toward this goal. Still, they could not leave the disputed realities of seventeenth-century Chinese Christianity behind.

Chapter 3 discusses the inner tensions characterizing the Learning of Heaven on the level of ideas, concepts, and doctrines. I argue that the so-called accommodation method was not the result only of learned dialogues and neat epistemological syntheses but was a compromise resulting from the contact between two large power systems, each with its own hegemonic claims and internal struggles. On the Catholic side, a multifaceted world of contradictions and frictions went into the exchanges that led to the Confucian-Christian synthesis, whose main framework was established by the turn of the seventeenth century. The other side of this dialogue was equally complex, particularly in the highly diverse—and somewhat discordant—landscape of Confucian teachings within which anti-Christian initiatives sanctioned by the state remained a recurrent source of potential threats. Using Zhu Zongyuan's writings and their specific historical contexts as its main reference, the chapter argues that the contours of the Learning of Heaven developed along the thin middle ground possible between the prerogatives of the global church on the one side and late Ming China on the other. In this complicated terrain, it was difficult for Catholicism to become sinicized in a manner that would allow it to blend neatly into the world of seventeenth-century Chinese teachings, or at least to strongly connect with any of the main Confucian camps of that period.

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which Zhu Zongyuan sought to come to terms with the foreign origins of his faith. This was a formidable challenge since—for a variety of reasons—the Learning of Heaven put emphasis on key concepts, liturgies, and symbols that were not Chinese but obviously of European origin. In addition, various factors in late Ming culture and intellectual life made it almost impossible to downplay the outside roots of Christianity. While attending to these contexts, the chapter investigates how Zhu Zongyuan sought to sort out the relationship between universal values and Chinese culture, between the concepts of “the Middle” and “the foreign.” To make his argument, Zhu reached deeply into the repertoire of Confucian learning and Chinese historiography. As the chapter reveals, it is here—when making a case for cultural opening—that Zhu felt compelled to operate strictly in the highbrow mode of a well-educated Confucian scholar.

The focus of chapter 5 is the unusually detailed images of Europe and the Jesuits in Zhu's works. Zhu paints Europe in the colors of Chinese Confucian ideals, and his portrait of that continent suggests the ancient Golden Age as described by Chinese classics. Similarly, in Zhu's account, Jesuit missionaries appear as Confucian sages arriving from afar to a Chinese society that—as Zhu saw it—no longer allowed for the cultivation of true wisdom. As the chapter shows, such idealizations of Europe were being disseminated by other Chinese converts as well as by European missionaries. While they were not necessarily meant to be taken at face value by Chinese readers, they responded to other, very different, perceptions of Europe and Catholicism circulating in seventeenth-century China. As the chapter describes, Zhu was clearly reacting to changing modes of regional and global consciousness among educated Chinese circles and their increasing sources of information. Events such as the Spanish colonization of the Philippines provoked concerns in many Chinese circles that Christianity served the interests of the European powers. Concerns of this kind, I argue, may have been aggravated by the roles of ethnic identities in the organizational fabric of late Ming Catholicism. As against the universal ideals espoused by the Learning of Heaven, Chinese individuals remained *de facto* barred from becoming priests during Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime.

The epilogue embeds the book's main themes in wider global historical outlooks on the world during Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime. It takes up issues such as the changing roles of religions along transcontinental trade routes and illuminates their entanglements with different, often opposing, power structures. It shows that the history of the Catholic China mission was only a facet of much larger global transformations and encounters taking place in many parts of the world. In the end, the resulting contacts and frictions went through individual human beings, all of whom had their own hopes and fears, and all of whom had to negotiate their own ambitions with many obstacles and constraints. There was something exceptional about Zhu Zongyuan, but at the same time—in his interest in ideas distant from his world and his sense that they might apply to his own environment—he had many equivalents, across other religions and other locations.

NOTES

Works are cited in full on first appearance in each set of chapter notes; subsequent references to the same work in a set of notes are abbreviated.

The only exceptions in citation style are the main works of Zhu Zongyuan. They are abbreviated in all occurrences in the notes, as follows:

Responses: Da kewen [Responses to the questions of a guest]

Summary: Zhengshi lüeshuo [A summary of world salvation]

Treatise: Tianzhu shengjiao huoyi lun [Treatise on the removal of doubts about Christianity]

In provisions of page numbers in citations to Zhu's works, the letters *a* and *b* indicate, respectively, the left-hand or right-hand side of a double-leafed page spread.

INTRODUCTION: SITUATING ZHU ZONGYUAN

1. For a historical overview of overseas Chinese, see Wang Gungwu, *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).
2. For critical inquiries into nineteenth- and twentieth-century notions of "culture," see Andrew Sartori, "The Resonance of 'Culture': Framing a Problem in Global Concept-History," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 4 (2005): 676–99.
3. On topics such as religious and cultural pluralism in commercial hubs, see, for example, Charles Parker, *Global Interactions in the Early Modern World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 182–221; Sanjay

- Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia: A Political and Economic History*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 274–78.
4. See, for example, Paul S. Ropp, *China in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
 5. Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. chapter 1.
 6. A substantial comparison between the European and the Chinese economies of the time—as well as an assessment of the relationship between the two—is provided in Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), and Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
 7. For insightful accounts of these entanglements between China during the Ming-Qing transition period and the world, see Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of a Global World* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008); John Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
 8. For a brief overview, see Theodore N. Foss, “Cartography,” in *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume 1: 635–1800*, ed. Nicolas Standaert, 752–70 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).
 9. Cow Street Mosque, or Niujie Libaisi, was expanded under the Kangxi emperor and is still operating today. See, for example, Wolfgang Franke, “Notes on Some Ancient Chinese Mosques,” in *Documenta Barbarorum: Festschrift für Walther Heissig zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Walther Heissig, Klaus Sagaster, and Michael Weiers, 111–26 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983).
 10. Thomas David DuBois, *Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 15–34, 94–105. A classic historical account of the early phase of Buddhism in China is Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1959).
 11. For more on these aspects of these aspects of the late Ming, see, for instance, Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 153–262.
 12. Nicolas Standaert, “Chinese Christians: General Characteristics,” in Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity*, 1:380–403.
 13. Research on Chinese Christians had long been constrained by a certain generational bias—in 1994, David Mungello was still writing on this problem, “Whereas the first generation of Christians, which included the Three Pillars, has received a great deal of attention, the second generation (which included Han Lin and Zhu Zongyuan) and the third generation have

- remained shadowy, ill-defined groups" (*The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994], 70–71). In the meantime, more studies on these generations of Chinese Christians have appeared, but they remain less studied than historical individuals like Yang Tingyun, Li Zhizao, or Xu Guangqi.
14. On European colonialism during this period, see Wolfgang Reinhard, *A Short History of Colonialism* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2011), 20–83.
 15. Certainly, global entanglements did frame the Manchu invasion of the world's largest polity and economy. See Evelyn Rawski, "Beyond National History: Seeking the Ethnic in China's History," *Crossroads* 5 (2012): 45–62. See also Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2005). On the Manchu conquest of China, see also Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
 16. Recent research accentuates the political and territorial ambitions of corporate agents such as the East India Company. See Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); H. V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke, and John G. Reid, eds., *Britain's Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
 17. Reinhard, *Short History of Colonialism*, 23–24.
 18. For a discussion of such facets of the Portuguese Empire, see Subrahmanyan, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 274–78.
 19. R. Bin Wong, "The Search for European Differences and Domination in the Early Modern World: A View from Asia," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 447–69; Frédéric Mauro, "Merchant Communities, 1350–1750," in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*, ed. James D. Tracy, 255–86 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
 20. The Spanish Philippines, which basically figured as an outpost of Spanish colonialism in America, were a constant source of competition with the Portuguese Empire. This rivalry intensified during the Portuguese Restoration War, which coincided with the decline of the *padroado* in East Asia. Based on earlier agreements with Rome, the *padroado* granted the Portuguese crown wide-ranging authority over ecclesiastical matters in its territories in Asia as well as some other parts of the world.
 21. Masashi Haneda, "Framework and Methods of Comparative Studies on Asian Port Cities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Asian Port Cities, 1600–1800: Local and Foreign Cultural Interactions*, ed. Masashi Haneda, 1–12 (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009).

22. All three empires had roots in the earlier Mongol and Timurid Empires. See John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire, 1400–2000* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 1–156; Parker, *Global Interactions*, 39–67.
23. Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 141–45.
24. For the latter, see Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 269–74.
25. Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia, Volume II: 1500 to 1900* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005), 430–32.
26. On Chinese positions in that controversy, see Nicolas Standaert, *Chinese Voices in the Rites Controversy: Travelling Books, Community Networks, Intercultural Arguments* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2012).
27. Ludwik Grzebień, “The Perception of the Asian Missions in Sixteenth to Seventeenth Century Poland During the Period of Re-Catholicisation,” *Monumenta Serica* 59, no.1 (2011): 177–89. Of course, such perceptions of eastern Europe also existed in the modern period, but then they were based on the idea of a gap between more and less advanced societies. See, for example, Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
28. Dominique Delandres, “*Exemplo aequo ut verbo*: The French Jesuits’ Missionary World,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts*, ed. John W. O’Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 261.
29. On the varying ways in which historiography dealt with leading missionaries like Matteo Ricci, see D. E. Mungello, “Reinterpreting the History of Christianity in China,” *Historical Journal* 55, no. 2 (2012): 533–52.
30. See, for example, Matteo Ricci [Li Madou], *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, trans. Douglas Lancashire, Peter Hu Kuo-chen, and Edward Malatesta (San Francisco: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985). An earlier example following the same hypothesis is Johannes Bettray, *Die Akkommodationsmethode des P. Matteo Ricci S. J. in China* (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1955).
31. Alluding to George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962).
32. For instance, Qiong Zhang, “Demystifying Qi: The Politics of Cultural Translation and Interpretation in the Early Jesuit Mission to China,” in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, ed. Lydia H. Liu, 74–106 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999); Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 279.
33. See, for example, Nicolas Standaert, “Jesuit Corporate Culture as Shaped by the Chinese,” in O’Malley, Bailey, Harris, and Kennedy, *The Jesuits*, 352–63; D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 15–30.
34. For example, the first Jesuit work dealing with Western astronomy published in Chinese seems to have failed on the Chinese market since it was a fairly

- direct translation of a European work. A subsequent version, which in terms of composition, structure, and format was much closer to Chinese traditions, was successful. See Rui Magone, "Portugal and the Jesuit Mission to China: Trends in Historiography," in *Europe and China: Science and Arts in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. Luís Saraiva (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012), 29n46.
35. Mungello, "Reinterpreting History," 533–52.
 36. This is not to suggest that Europeanists were prone to taking Eurocentric perspectives. In fact, many scholars with a Europeanist training grew highly critical of Eurocentric perspectives. See, for example, Luis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988).
 37. See, for example, Paul Rule, "China-Centered Mission History," in *Historiography of the Chinese Catholic Church: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. J. Heyndrickx, 52–59 (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 1994); Nicolas Standaert, "New Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in China," *Catholic Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (1997): 573–613; Erik Zürcher, "From Jesuit Studies to Western Learning," in *Europe Studies China: Papers from an International Conference on the History of European Sinology*, ed. Ming Wilson and John Cayley, 264–79 (London: Han-Shan Tang Books, 1995).
 38. For more, see Kaiyuan Zhang, "Chinese Perspective: A Brief Review of the Historical Research on Christianity in China," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, ed. Stephen Uhalley Jr. and Xiaoxin Wu, 29–39 (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2001).
 39. For instance, dealing with individual Chinese Christians, Mao Ruifang, *Wang zheng yu wanming xixue dongjian* [Wang Zheng and the eastern spread of Western learning during the late Ming] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2011). Examples of studies on wider topics are Huang Yinong, *Liangtou she: Mingmo qingchu de diyi dai tianzhujiaotu* [The two-headed snake: The first generation of Catholics in the late Ming and early Qing] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006); Li Shixue, *Zhongguo wanming yu ouzhou wenxue: Mingmo yesuhui gudian xing zhengdao gushi kaoquan* [European literature in late Ming China: Jesuit examples, their sources, and interpretation] (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian chubanshe, 2010).
 40. Through a broadening scholarly base, the range of Chinese historical documents consulted in the study of Christianity in China has grown significantly wider. For an overview, see Adrian Dudink, "Chinese Primary Sources," in Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity*, 1:113–60.
 41. Earlier examples by these authors include Mungello, *Forgotten Christians*; Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: His Life and Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Erik Zürcher, *Bouddhisme, Christianisme et société chinoise* (Paris: Julliard, 1990). See also Yu Liu, *Harmonious Disagreement: Matteo Ricci and His Closest Chinese Friends* (New York: Lang, 2015).

42. Earlier academic publications did deal with specific Chinese regions, but there was a tendency to focus on missionaries. These include Auguste M. Colombel, *Histoire de la Mission du Kiang-nan: En trois parties*, 3 vols. (Shanghai: Imprimerie de la Mission catholique à l'Orphelinat de T'ou-sè-weè, 1895–1905); Fortunato Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi dalle origini al 1738* (Rome: Edizioni Sinica franciscana, 1958). More recent examples by sinologists are Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Erik Zürcher, "The Jesuit Mission in Fujian in Late Ming Times: Levels of Response," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E. B. Vermeer, 417–57 (Leiden: Brill, 1990).
43. The main study on Yang is Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*. A broad range of studies on Xu (influenced mainly by new methodological trends) is Catherine Jami, Peter M. Engelfriet, and Gregory Blue, eds., *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562–1633)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). An older sinological study of Xu is Monika Übelhör, "Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562–1633) und seine Einstellung zum Christentum: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der späten Ming-Zeit (Teil 1)," *Oriens Extremus*, 15, no. 2 (1968): 191–257; Monika Übelhör, "Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562–1633) und seine Einstellung zum Christentum: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der späten Ming-Zeit (Teil 2)," *Oriens Extremus* 16, no. 1 (1969): 41–74.
44. For example, Gail King, "Candida Xu and the Growth of Christianity in China in the Seventeenth Century," *Monumenta Serica* 46 (1998): 49–66; Feng-chuan Pan, "Moral Ideas and Practices," in Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity*, 1:653–67. Regarding Christians from lower social strata, primary source materials containing testimony about locally or socially specific faith systems are scarce, so many studies need to rely on prayer books for learned converts and missionaries as well as Jesuit reports. An example of a study based on the former is Li Jiubiao, *Kouduo richao: Li Jiubiao's "Diary of Oral Admonitions"; A Late Ming Christian Journal*, trans. Erik Zürcher (Nettetal, Ger.: Steyler, 2007). Other important works in the field are Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); Zhang Xianqing, *Guanfu, zongzu yu tianzhujiao: 17-19 shiji fuan xiangcun jiaohui de lishi xushi* [Local government, lineage, and Catholicism: A narrative history of the church in 17th- to 19th-century rural Fuan] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009).
45. Anthony Grafton, "The History of Ideas: Precepts and Practice, 1950–2000 and Beyond," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 1 (2006): 1–32, particularly 10–11. The field of intellectual history has also become more open to the study of transcultural and global encounters. See, for example, Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

46. Li, *Kouduo richao*.
47. For example, Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2007); Liam Matthew Brockey, *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014).
48. A good example of a biography based on roughly equal use of Chinese and European primary source materials is R. Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
49. For more, see Magone, “Portugal and the Jesuit Mission,” 3–30.
50. Brockey, *Journey to the East*, chapter 8.
51. For an introduction based on recent scholarship, see Timothy Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe, 1648–1815* (New York: Viking, 2007), chapters 7, 10.
52. On this latter categorization, see Vincent Goossaert, “1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion?” *Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 307–35, particularly 320–22.
53. The recent research trends I have been describing further erode the idea that through the China mission two separate, quasi-monolithic cultures—Confucian China and Latin Christendom—came into contact. In 1982, the French sinologist Jacques Gernet published a work treating European and Chinese culture as monolithic, unsynthesizable entities. He argued that the mission was doomed to fail since the European and Chinese conceptual worlds stood too far apart to be able to truly communicate and reach cross-cultural syntheses; Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), originally published as *Chine et christianisme: La première confrontation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982).
54. On global and transnational history in general, see for example Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016); Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). See also Dominic Sachsenmaier, “Cultural and Religious Exchanges,” in *Architects of World History: Researching the Global Past*, ed. Kenneth R. Curtis and Jerry H. Bentley, 108–33 (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014); and Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: Norton, 2015).
55. See for example Hans Medick, “Turning Global? Microhistory in Extension,” *Historische Anthropologie* 24, no. 2 (2016): 241–52; Tonio Andrade, “A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Toward a Global Microhistory,” *Journal of World History* 21, no. 4 (2010): 573–91; Anne Gerritsen, “Scales of a Local: The Place of Locality in a Globalizing World,” in *A Companion to World History*, ed. Douglas Northrup, 213–26 (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Natalie Zemon Davis, “Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a

- Global World,” *History and Theory* 50, no. 2 (2011): 188–202. More generally on the relationship between microscopic and macroscopic perspectives see Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (New York: Pantheon, 2007); and Matti Peltonen, “Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research,” *History and Theory*, 40, no. 3 (2001): 347–59.
56. In a Western language, the main work available on Zhu Zongyuan thus far is my own book in German (which covers different topics from this monograph): Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Die Aufnahme europäischer Inhalte in die chinesische Kultur durch Zhu Zongyuan (ca. 1616–1660)*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 47 (Nettetal, Ger.: Steyler, 2001).
 57. Fang Hao, *Zhongguo tianzhujiaoshi luncong jiaqi* [A compilation of the history of Catholicism in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947); Fang Hao, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao shi renwu zhuan* [Figures of Chinese Catholic history] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1970), 2:91–98.
 58. In French, this unpublished thesis deals largely with aspects of Zhu Zongyuan’s thought: Okamoto, Sai, “La crise politique et morale des mandarins du sud à l’époque de transition” (PhD diss., Université des lettres, Paris, 1969). In his seminal work on the Manchu conquest of China, Frederic Wakeman Jr. briefly discusses Zhu Zongyuan, based largely on Okamoto’s text: Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 735–36.
 59. Li Yeye, “Mingmo qingchu jidujiao shengsiguan zai zhongguo de chuanbo yu jieshou” [The spread and reception of Christian perceptions of life and death in China during the late Ming and early Qing periods] (M.A. thesis, Shanghai Normal University, 2008); Wang Zeying, “Lun zhu zongyuan zhi tianru guan” [On Zhu Zongyuan’s perception of heaven and Confucianism] (M.A. thesis, Ningbo University, 2011); Hu Jinping, “Lun zhu zongyuan dui yuanzui de jieshi” [On Zhu Zongyuan’s explanation of original sin] (M.A. thesis, Capital Normal University, Beijing, 2007); Wen Liqin, “Zhu zongyuan sixiang yanjiu” [A study of Zhu Zongyuan’s thought] (M.A. thesis, Zhejiang University, 2007); Zhao Dianhong, “Qingchu yesu huishi zai jiangnan de chuanjiao huodong” [A study on Jesuits’ proselytizing activities during the early Qing period in Jiangnan] (PhD diss., Jinan University, 2006).
 60. Mo Zhengyi, “Mingmo qingchu zhedong rushi zhu zongyuan xixue guan yanjiu: jianyu huang zongxi sixiang bijiao” [A study of the eastern Zhejiang scholar Zhu Zongyuan’s opinion of Western studies: A comparison with Huang Zongxi], *Guoxue yu xixue guoji xuekan* 11 (2016): 95–105; Wang Zeying, “Mingmo tianzhujiao rushi zhu zongyuan shengping kao” [Investigating the biography of the late Ming Catholic scholar Zhu Zongyuan], *Ningbo jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 5 (2010): 96–98; Gong Yingyan, “Mingqing zhiji de zhedong xueren yu xixue” [Scholars from eastern Zhejiang and Western learning during the late Ming and early Qing period], *Zhejiang daxue xuebao* 3 (2006): 60–68; Zhu Pingyi, “Piwang xingmi: Mingqing zhiji de tianzhujiao yu ‘mixin’ zhi jiangou” [Enlightening the deluded and awakening the bewildered:

- Christianity and the term *mixin* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China], *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 84, no. 4 (2013): 695–752.
61. In the case of more prominent Christians, materials are available that enable the historian to reconstruct larger parts of their biographies. This is most notably the case with the so-called Three Pillars of early Chinese Christianity. See, for example, Willard J. Peterson, “Why Did They Become Christians? Yang T’ing-yun, Li Chih-tsao, and Hsü Kuang-ch’i,” in *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582–1773*, ed. Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh, 129–51 (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982); Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*. A creative way of compensating for scarcity of sources on single individuals through fictional additions to an academic investigation is Mungello, *Forgotten Christians*.
 62. In recent years, an increasing number of studies have come to explore the global facets of early modern Catholic history. See, for example, R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); R. Po-chia Hsia, ed., *A Companion to the Reformation World* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), chapters 20–23.

1. A LOCAL LIFE AND ITS GLOBAL CONTEXTS

1. While ordinary people usually lived in single-story houses, the dwellings of wealthier families tended to be two stories high. See Fu Xuancong, *Ningbo tongshi* [A general history of Ningbo] (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2009), 3:291, 428.
2. For a history of Ningbo’s overseas trade, see Li Qingxin, *Mingdai haiwai maoyi zhidu* [The overseas trade system during the Ming dynasty] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007). On the porcelain trade, see Stacey Pierson, “The Movement of Chinese Ceramics: Appropriation in Global History,” *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 9–40.
3. See, for example, Yoshinobu Shiba, “Ningpo and Its Hinterland,” in *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner, 391–440 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977).
4. Under the Ming, Ningbo was the seat of offices such as the Maritime Trade Supervisorate (*shibosi*), and later it also functioned as the garrison headquarters of the Qing troops in Zhejiang. See Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 250–51.
5. For a detailed account, see Fu, *Ningbo tongshi*, 3:185–235, 4:3–25.
6. More can be found in John E. Wills Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622–1681* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

5

EUROPEAN ORIGINS ON TRIAL

A PEACEFUL HOMELAND?

The Western origins of Christianity were not just a philosophical problem. There were also reports and rumors that raised concerns about the trustworthiness of the message the Jesuit fathers had brought to China. After all, Catholicism had clear connections with European powers in regions surrounding the Ming state, especially the Portuguese and Spanish Empires. Not only the well-read elites became increasingly aware of the presence of Europeans in East Asia. Likewise, not only educated Chinese came to know more and more about the Christian God worshipped by the people from the Far West. Even within the lower strata of Chinese society, news circulated about Iberian traders, merchants, and mercenaries, and it did so increasingly along with images of other Europeans operating in the vicinity of China, including the Dutch and the British.

Although some publications provided information about single Western countries, in late Ming and early Qing China, it was not uncommon to lump various Europeans—whether missionaries or traders—into one cultural or ethnic category. A variety of terms circulated—for instance, during the 1500s “Franks” (*folangji*) emerged as a common connotation for all Europeans.¹ Even the category of “Europe” existed during Zhu Zongyuan’s lifetime, with *ouluoba* being among the most common transliterations into Chinese. This term came partly from

the missionaries themselves, who used it, for example, in their published world maps, which in addition to referring to Europe provided information about individual European states while downplaying conflicts among them.²

The Far West was still a distant world, however. Unlike the age of high imperialism and later, Europe was not a central player in Chinese economic, political, and intellectual life; it was simply not of great general interest, and there were no efforts to systematically collect a large amount of facts about it.³ Nevertheless, in Chinese society there was some information about developments like European colonialism and violent conflict in the seas surrounding China. Such knowledge was certainly not compatible with the idealized Confucian-Christian self-presentation of Catholicism in China, and its transmission channels into China were remarkable. The Jesuit cartographic works and other reports about Europeans did not contain any substantial information about the Portuguese, Spanish, or other European empires. Giulio Aleni's world map, for example, was silent about European ambitions in the wider region: his discussion of the Philippine island of Luzon mentions the abundance of giant eagles and poisonous snakes, but not Spanish rule.⁴ Yet Confucian-educated scholars and officials were rarely a source of first-hand information, either, since they seldom ventured outside their own state.⁵ Thus most news concerning its maritime neighbors entering China came primarily from traders and coolie labor, eventually reaching a large number of people, including the Confucian elite, which in late Ming times increasingly intermarried in merchant circles, particularly in places like the lower Yangtze region and adjacent coastal areas.⁶

The sea remained a formative factor for the society and economy of places like Ningbo, and a dense network of short- as well as long-distance connections linked them to Asian and global circuits.⁷ Merchants and especially early kinds of migrant workers ventured abroad, and Chinese migration to Southeast Asia intensified steadily despite alternating waves of tightening and loosening government control, peaking during the Ming-Qing transition crisis around the middle of the seventeenth century.⁸ The one million Chinese who left for Southeast Asia between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries

meant that there were sizable groups of Chinese residents in many, small and large, trade hubs in East Asia, particularly Southeast Asia and the Philippines.⁹ In the words of John E. Wills, “the Chinese were everywhere, even though the Ming state forbade all maritime voyages by Chinese.”¹⁰

In many places, therefore, Chinese workers and traders had contact with people from other regions, including Middle Easterners, South Asians, and Europeans. At the same time, overseas Chinese typically maintained close ties with their native land. Unsurprising, then, that word about the situation in Southeast Asia traveled back into Chinese society. Such reports contained knowledge of Europe and Europeans that was rather different from the portraits of a Far West dominated by the Learning of Heaven. On the contrary, they told of a violent world of permanent struggle over market share and economic gain, a complex story of shifting fortunes and alliances.¹¹ Europeans were part of this world and had been since at least 1512, when Portuguese forces captured Malacca, whose ruler had previously been a Chinese vassal. Already at that time, they encountered Chinese settlers there, and through them the message of this act of violence came back to China, where even thirty years later Portuguese negotiators were being asked by court envoys why Malacca had been subjugated.¹²

Incidents of this kind did not abate during the seventeenth century. For instance, the Philippines, where the Spanish had established a colony in the sixteenth century, counted fifteen thousand Chinese living in Manila alone. Chinese revolts there were crushed in two separate massacres in 1603 and 1639, and these incidents attracted much interest in China. The first massacre was described by the Ming traveler Zhang Xie in great detail in his widely read work *Investigation of the Eastern and Western Seas*.¹³ Matteo Ricci, while residing in the Ming state, noted the killing of more than ten thousand Chinese.¹⁴ What is more, there was knowledge of the many Chinese slaves in the Iberian empires—a phenomenon so common that all Asian slaves in the Spanish Empire were called *Chinos*.¹⁵

There were also incidents with Europeans closer to China’s mainland. On Taiwan, where Chinese settlements had existed prior to the arrival of the Europeans, complaints about Dutch rule and their high

tax demands grew so loud that they became known in the Chinese core regions.¹⁶ Among other things, this caused difficulties for the Jesuit father Giulio Aleni, who had personal connections with Dutch sailors. In addition, the fierce competition among the Europeans, such as the Dutch attempt to seize Macao from the Portuguese in 1622, was noted by some Chinese observers.¹⁷ There were also smaller military actions undertaken by Europeans on Chinese soil. An example is an expedition led by John Weddell that, in defiance of all Chinese and Portuguese prohibitions, sailed up the Pearl River in 1637, retreating only after inflicting damage on the coastal areas and skirmishes with Chinese war junks.¹⁸

Nor were ordinary relations between Chinese and European merchants particularly harmonious. During the late Ming, European traders often portrayed their Chinese partners in an extremely negative light,¹⁹ while, on the other side, there was no shortage of reports about unscrupulous behavior and ruthless profiteering by European traders. At least in some parts of Chinese society, the Europeans gained a reputation as smugglers and pirates who were active off the coast of southern China. These included Iberians who were integrated into a hundred-year-old Japanese buccaneer network that operated chiefly off the coasts of Fujian and Zhejiang, as noted in various Chinese records. The Ming government even broke its own policy not to support Chinese traders and established a military presence in the Pescadores in 1624.²⁰

In any case, in some parts of Chinese society, the Jesuit missionaries were not distinguished from European merchants and conquerors; consequently, not a few people viewed them with distrust.²¹ Some critical voices pointed to the economic activities of the Society of Jesus: indeed, the fathers were able to supplement their annual contributions from Rome through business operations like money lending.²² And of course outside convert circles, there was general concern about the Learning of Heaven, its foreign clerics and its alien symbolism. Fostered in a climate of political insecurity and societal anxiety, this concern lay, among other factors, behind repeated incidents in which missionaries or mission stations were attacked by the local population.²³

Remarkable rumors abounded. In some Chinese regions, people whispered that Europeans engaged in cannibalism, eating local children—hearsay that may have been triggered by the Portuguese practice of purchasing children for labor.²⁴ Moreover, there is evidence of repeated claims that the Portuguese were planning to invade China.²⁵ In 1606 unconfirmed information about an imminent invasion, in which the Jesuits were said to be involved, caused panic throughout the Pearl River delta region, with repercussions including the outbreak of revolts among Chinese residents in Macao.²⁶

Among members of the educated elite, too, the Jesuits could be suspected of spying, and in this case they were accused of making clandestine preparations for a European invasion of China, of using their teachings to rob the Chinese population of its powers of resistance.²⁷ Such claims were made during the persecutions against Christians in Nanjing (1616–1617), and the Jesuit Alfonso Vagnoni was forced to disclose in detail the source and channels of the mission money in Macao. In addition, the fathers were said to be bribing their followers in order to organize revolts in China.²⁸ It was contended that the insurrections planned by the Jesuits were timed to break out simultaneously with an invasion from abroad:

On the pretext of trading, these barbarians rented a piece of land in Luzon, then persuaded the local people to follow their doctrine, and finally took possession of Luzon. They always proceed in this way: conversion is simply a preliminary step leading up to occupation. The astronomy, calendar, cannons, sciences, and technology . . . are merely pretexts for spreading their doctrine throughout every province and prefecture; their object in diffusing their doctrine in this way is to reach a position in which they will be able to take over China.

This text was written in 1638 in the context of anti-Christian persecutions in the province of Fujian,²⁹ and similar arguments had played a role in the earlier anti-Christian events in Nanjing: the Catholics were deemed a subversive sect paving the way for military action, and also here the example of the Philippines and its main island, Luzon, was brought forward.³⁰

The charge of a planned invasion was mostly idle talk, but ironically that did not mean it was completely unfounded. Decades before, there had been brief discussions about invading the Chinese state—for instance in 1580, the Spanish council in Manila actually endorsed a plan to conquer China together with the great unifier of Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598); according to the plan, the Jesuits were to serve as interpreters. Manila requested military support from Spain for this audacious undertaking, but Madrid never approved it.³¹ Given China's military strength, such plots were just not feasible, even at the peak of the late Ming crisis a few decades later.

IDEALIZING IMAGES

Not that the charge of attempting political destabilization was leveled only against foreign teachings: in an age of growing insecurity, there were frequent accusations that a particular religion led directly or indirectly to revolts during the late Ming period. For instance, the scholars Wang Gen (1483–1541) and Lin Zhaoen, who were both closely affiliated with Buddhist circles, were linked to the White Lotus sect (*bailian jiao*) because of the populist bent of its teachings and the religious symbols it used.³² In fact, given the cataclysmic situation on many fronts, late Ming people were preoccupied with worries and fears other than those concerned with the Europeans. Nevertheless, official and popular apprehensions about the potential dangers emanating from the Learning of Heaven were strong enough to warrant at least some kind of a rejoinder; European missionaries and Chinese Christians could not remain silent in the face of the charges levied against them—Zhu Zongyuan also reacted to allegations against the Jesuits and of their secret plots.

Most Christian missionaries and converts did not respond directly to these charges. In theory, it would have been possible to present Christianity as a God-inspired religion whose values would remain in deep opposition to all evil of this world, including atrocities committed by Europeans in Asia and elsewhere. This would not have been far-fetched, since teachings based on the Augustinian distinction between the City of God and the City of Man figured largely in

seventeenth-century Catholicism, including Jesuit thought. Similarly, all the major Confucian schools were formulating their ideals based on a critical evaluation of the contemporary condition—not on the assumption that their teachings had already brought about the best of all possible worlds.

Yet the pro-Christian literature as well as the geographical knowledge spread by the Jesuits in China did not engage with topics like European colonialism in any significant manner. In addition, the crisis Catholicism was facing back in Europe was more or less covered up in China. It is almost out of the question that Zhu had heard of the strong currents of anticlericalism and antipapalism in Europe, nor would he have had any notion of the militant church or the strong anti-eclesiastical sentiments in parts of Europe. It is even unclear whether Zhu was cognizant of the Reformation, which, for more than a century before his writing, had split Latin Christendom and grown into a much wider crisis of intellectual, political, and spiritual authority. That a major war was raging in Europe, and that this conflict, at least on the surface, also was fought over the political positions of Catholicism, remained an obscured fact in China. To put it in a different way, it is likely that Zhu never learned of the Thirty Years' War that was ravaging Europe precisely at the time he was writing his texts.

The global dynamics connecting Zhu's society with the Thirty Years' War³³ were unknown, and general knowledge of the conditions in Europe was scant. What kind of imagery, then, did the Christians come up with when encountering distrustful voices speaking of colonial projects in the greater China region? In a word, many pro-Christian publications sought to propagate an idealized image of Europe. Excessively positive descriptions of political and social conditions there had been a common topos in Chinese-language missionary literature since Matteo Ricci's lengthy description of the manufactured realities of his homeland in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*.³⁴ In this foundational text, a model for much of the pro-Christian literature to come, Europe was at least partly described as a place in which Confucian ideals had long been realized. Missionaries like Giulio Aleni and Alfonso Vagnoni also portrayed Europe as having idyllic sociopolitical conditions and perfect ethical standards.³⁵ To

avoid undermining their idealizations with too many specifics, many Jesuit texts provided little information on European history and described only isolated aspects of European thought.³⁶

These greatly reduced representations of Europe continued in the writings of some Chinese converts, including texts by prominent figures such as Xu Guangqi, one of the “three pillars” of Chinese Catholicism.³⁷ Zhu Zongyuan was no exception. In his *Responses to a Guest's Questions*, Zhu depicted the continent far to the west as a place of peace and virtue where people did not pocket money they found on the street, did not lock their doors at night, where seventy states coexisted in harmony and not one dynasty had fallen for more than sixteen hundred years. The soil, he wrote, was fertile and rich, the animal species many and varied, and veritable mountains of natural resources were available. The overall wealth of Europe could be seen in its grand homes and palaces adorned with gold and precious stones, the beautiful clothing, and the exquisite food and drink. Zhu continued that the intellectual achievements of European scholars and their technological advances were outstanding.³⁸

Key parts of Zhu's descriptions allude to a famous passage in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*). This work, which belongs to the Five Classics of Confucianism, likewise tells of a society in which doors did not need to be locked at night—a society where people loved their family members, treated strangers with respect, and where there was enough work for all able-bodied. According to the *Book of Rites*, political stability in this society was guaranteed and social harmony complete because the Great Way (*dadao*) prevailed.³⁹ People lived in harmony with one another and in congruence with nature; they were not driven to selfish actions that would inevitably inflict pain on others.

Confucian tradition did not put forth this perfect society as a utopian vision but as a true account of a long-bygone world. Basically all Confucian schools agreed that the golden age had existed several millennia before, but that it had been lost because the Way was no longer transmitted.⁴⁰ By contrast, Zhu Zongyuan's ideal world existed in the present, albeit in a geographically remote location. His portrait of Europe is essentially a projection of time onto space—China's ideal golden age onto contemporaneous Europe. He makes it clear that in

Europe the social and political conditions of the present were essentially identical to the order of China under the great emperors in the past. But his picture of European society should not be likened to those accounts of “noble savages” that became influential in eighteenth-century European political philosophy. Zhu’s repeated references to the advanced state of scholarship, science, and technology in the Far West made it clear that Europe was not akin to the idealized early agricultural societies under the early emperors. Instead, its similarity to the great lost age invoked by Confucian literature lay in its moral qualities and stability.

The main message of Zhu’s portrait of Europe was that the Learning of Heaven would be able to perfect Confucianism and stabilize the situation in China. It also implied that late Ming China compared unfavorably not only with a distant past in the early dynasties but also with contemporary Europe. Following this portrait of Europe, Zhu contrasts the homelands of the Jesuit fathers directly with the situation in his own homeland; he addresses points ranging from political order to the living standards of the general population and determines that China is inferior to the Far West.⁴¹ He even arrives at the conclusion that “if someone takes the thought and customs of such people and despises them as barbarians, I am afraid that *these* are not the barbarians.”⁴²

To a certain degree, Zhu’s depiction of Europe can be read as a Confucian rapprochement with the Learning of Heaven. At the same time, however, the comparisons with late Ming society suggest that his account of Europe was more than a philosophical abstraction, that he wanted his readers to take it at face value. As we shall see, Zhu mentions others’ concerns about European violence in his works, but his portrait of Europe remains untouched by those concerns. He offers up a vision of a land of bliss, an ideal world that supposedly existed in reality and hence could serve as a model for his readers’ own ethico-political visions for China.

The distorted—indeed fictional—account of Europe was possible only because of the knowledge landscapes of the time. No scholar in Ming China had the international networks and the expertise to systematically contrast other ideas of Europe with the image propagated by pro-Christian texts. As mentioned, only sporadic evidence of European

militancy and involvement in conflicts in East and Southeast Asia was available, and Chinese scholar-officials could not do much more than make educated guesses. To make matters worse, the information about Europe itself was channeled by European missionaries who had their own agenda. All these factors fed into the dissemination of an extremely distorted, if not even entirely fictional, image of Europe in China.

In these circumstances, the Society of Jesus played out its advantages as a global organization that could systematically gather and disseminate information about other societies, cultures, and religions.⁴³ In the two centuries following its establishment, the Jesuits built a nexus for the collection, interpretation, and transmission of knowledge, a network based on flows from and among missions in distant lands and regional hubs like Macao, flows that eventually arrived at the center—Rome.⁴⁴ The society's headquarters in Rome even established a system of newsletters with reports about missionary experiences throughout the world, and these newsletters circulated across its provinces.⁴⁵ Feeding into this information base, Jesuit college instructors engaged in sometimes transcontinental exchanges concerning theological, philosophical, and scientific questions.⁴⁶

This body of available global knowledge based on epistolary communication was certainly unrivaled by local elites in China, Japan, India, or anywhere else. The global information accrued by Jesuit fathers thus had the potential to fascinate educated circles in different parts of the world, particularly in societies with flourishing book markets. In Europe, Jesuit publications about places in which they had missions and literature based on these publications were translated into a variety of languages, often becoming best sellers.⁴⁷ This also included political and historical accounts that partly described events such as the fall of the Ming dynasty through ecclesiastical interpretations, likening their root causes to the alleged origins of the religious wars in the world of Latin Christendom. Many European readers, however, read the Jesuits' descriptions of other world regions mainly with a keen interest in newly available information on distant societies and cultures.⁴⁸ Outside Europe, there was equal excitement about this information: in late Ming China, annotated Jesuit world maps containing a wealth of information could sell out of several editions within a single year.⁴⁹

Their global knowledge earned the Jesuit fathers social respect and cultural authority, which was beneficial for their religious ambitions. The main purpose of systematically gathering information about distant societies and cultures, however, was to directly enhance missionary endeavors. To this end, an exaggeratedly polished image of Europe was helpful. It was intended to build cultural trust and raise acceptance levels of the Learning of Heaven.

FATHERS AS SAGES

Word of European violence in the region was evidently substantial enough in a port city like Ningbo that Zhu had to address it in several of his works.⁵⁰ In fact, his portrayal of the Jesuits in *Responses to a Guest's Questions* opens with a discussion of rumors about a planned European invasion. The work contains Zhu's lengthiest discussion of this subject, one that evolves into a longer account of the missionaries' moral character. Regarding the accusation that the Jesuit fathers harbored subversive intentions, Zhu tells readers they should look at the past: "The previous [missionaries] have died, their successors have grown old, and the alleged plans have not yet appeared—how long must we [then] wait?"⁵¹

Zhu further maintains that no one has ever heard of the Jesuits holding secret meetings—and that such gatherings would be impossible anyway since the fathers traveled using only Chinese transportation. Furthermore, rumors that the missionaries were masters of alchemy and possessed the art of making silver and gold⁵² were simply false, because there was absolutely no possibility of finding any evidence in support of such claims. Zhu writes, "So it is really not the case that they are planning destruction. Are these, then, scholars who do not live up to their standards and deceive the people with words, [when] they are supplied with food and ration payments from their country over a distance of ten thousand perilous miles?"⁵³

For Zhu, additional evidence of the Jesuits' good intentions was that Christianity was already present in China during the Tang dynasty (618–907) in the form of Nestorianism (*jingjiao*)⁵⁴ and had

not been harmful then. The background to this assertion was the discovery of the Nestorian stele in Xian in the year 1623—since then, Jesuits and converts often spoke of Christianity's long presence in the Middle Kingdom. The Nestorian tradition in China thus permitted the European religion to be represented, at least to some extent, as a part of the Chinese past. Evidence of Christian roots in China's own culture was not without its impact on society at the end of the Ming: the discovery of the Nestorian stele appears to have led to a wave of conversions.⁵⁵

Moreover, Zhu continues, the missionaries did not all come from a single country, thus it could be asked just whose plans the order was executing. And given the ninety thousand Chinese miles separating the continent from China, invasion by Europeans was strategically impossible.⁵⁶ Other evidence against a supposed role of the Jesuits in a subversive plot focuses more on the personal qualities of the fathers. Zhu argues, for example, that the Jesuits were great scholars who could hold high office in their home countries but who were nevertheless led solely by the truth of God and their desire to teach it. Their renunciation of fame and fortune proved their honesty, and their readiness to suffer the trials and tribulations of long journeys,⁵⁷ illness, and persecution revealed their pure intentions:

Anyone who advances theories in order to deceive people is always reliant on the power to manipulate people's emotions. The Western scholars hold steadfastly to their teaching. . . . When a sovereign seeks to coerce them, they are steadfast and virtuous, just as metal and stone cannot be bent. They love only that which has deep [roots], believe only that which is supremely honest. For this reason, their [attitudes and beliefs] remain the same unto death. . . . The Western scholars remain abstinent throughout their whole lives, they deny themselves, and work hard day and night, much more than most people. They wear the proper scholarly robes and hats at all times. . . . When they speak, the expression on their faces is as friendly as the spring and as honest as the autumn. They are friendly and helpful in all things, but without the desire to gain favor.⁵⁸

Zhu proceeds to explain that the missionaries were concerned only with spreading their teaching, and drank of suffering as if it were sugared water. Furthermore, they lacked all arrogance, bore humiliation and violence without resistance, and had absolutely no thirst for revenge. The passage closes with the following question: "How can there be anyone under heaven who would neglect his own life and yet be intent upon deceiving others?"⁵⁹

With its emphasis on virtues like human warmth, wisdom, and propriety, Zhu's portrait of the Jesuits reveals fundamental aspects of the Confucian concept of the consummate person. Qualities like adhering to one's principles and accepting suffering for the sake of spreading the proper teaching were also propagated in a wide range of Confucian texts.⁶⁰ Together with other aspects of personal growth, they tended to be defined as the basis for communal action and the foundation of human coexistence.⁶¹ In times of crisis like the late Ming era, several Confucian schools, including the Donglin Academy, particularly emphasized virtues like resoluteness and unwavering loyalty to one's values, even at the risk of death.⁶²

Zhu Zongyuan hence follows the practice common among Chinese Christians of describing the Jesuits as "scholars from the West" (*xiru*). As mentioned earlier, eminent missionaries like Matteo Ricci and Giulio Aleni were frequently referred to in this way,⁶³ and the Jesuits also used this term to describe themselves. Over the entrance gate of the Jesuit residence in Nanjing, for example, hung a plaque inscribed, "Residence of the scholars from the Great West (*daxi rushe*)."⁶⁴ All this was part of the presentation of Christianity as "Western learning."

Certain Chinese intellectual trends worked in favor of applying the concept of the scholar (*ru*) to the European fathers. Some classical texts used the term *ru* for a cultivated individual, one who was in harmony with his true self, society, mankind, the world at large, and heaven.⁶⁵ In late Ming China, the term did not necessarily connote a state of self-perfection; it was in use more as a term of honor for individuals who had dedicated themselves to the Confucian tradition. The Jesuits' depiction as *ru* was facilitated by the fact that in the Ming era generally, the ideal Confucian scholar did not necessarily have to hold political office. This appreciation of Confucianism as a teaching outside

official channels was rooted in a centuries-long development.⁶⁶ As a general intellectual climate, this pattern continued through much of the Ming period.⁶⁷ During this time, many influential circles in the Confucian orbit were praising key Buddhist scholars for their scholarly standing, albeit they were not necessarily sufficiently steeped in the Confucian tradition to pass the state examinations.⁶⁸ Additionally, Chinese Islamic writings referred to Muhammad as a great Western sage, and in this context they were applying Confucian terminology.⁶⁹

There were thus many precedents and parallels to the claim that the Jesuit fathers in China embodied the highest Confucian values.⁷⁰ In several of his writings, Zhu seeks to bolster this idea. For example, in a passage in the *Treatise on the Destruction of Superstition*, he refers to the Jesuits in the following manner:

These people are all intelligent, wise, loyal, honest, warmhearted, compassionate, and friendly. Their words lead people to sudden enlightenment [wu]. No one is unmoved and does not turn as if touched by a spring breeze. Why is their human nature alone so different from that of other people? Because what they give and what they take are clear and the method of teaching is perfect.⁷¹

This passage is rich in allusions. For instance, the analogy of the spring breeze leaving no one untouched is clearly reminiscent of a passage in the *Analects* of Confucius. Here the master likens the relationships that gentlemen of great personal integrity (*junzi*) have with others to the interactions between grass and wind. When the wind blows, the grass must bend.⁷² In other words, the Jesuits are described as consummate human beings in the Confucian sense, people who, by virtue of possessing the only proper teaching, can influence others by the sheer force of their personality, just as the sages of old had. Moreover, Zhu holds that the European fathers had the personal power to trigger an immediate insight or sudden enlightenment in the people they personally encountered. The concept of sudden enlightenment and the corresponding terms *wu* and *wujue* were used frequently in neo-Confucian philosophy. The concept probably goes back to Buddhist influences, but in late Ming times it was used by a wide range of Confucian schools. Even

Gao Panlong, the leader of the traditionalist Donglin Academy, told of an experience of such sudden, intuitive learning.⁷³

The implications of Zhu's words are clear: as profound thinkers and charismatic individuals, the Jesuits are directly related to the ideals of the morally accomplished individual laid out in the Confucian classics. This representation of the European fathers as Confucian gentlemen is entangled with Zhu's painting of Europe in the colors of the lost golden age in Confucian thought. Both need to be seen in the context of the wider claim that Christianity, the Learning of Heaven, continued the Confucian Way that had been lost in China. This message becomes explicit in the following passage of the *Treatise on the Destruction of Superstition*: "What a shame! We have lost the heavenly learning that was originally universal, and believe mistakenly that it is a teaching from the countries of the West. . . . There are those who raise a hue and cry that [we] should awaken anxiously and think [about our true condition] with trepidation. Thus we have forgotten what we share in common [with the Jesuits]. Instead we exclaim that they are different."⁷⁴ Reading through these descriptions, it is perhaps not too surprising that in the *Responses* Zhu Zongyuan goes even a step further and applies the term "sage" (*shengxian*) to the Jesuit missionaries. He writes, "When the Western scholars teach, their entire morality overall is as [high as] it was during the three dynasties. Most of these figures are without a doubt sages."⁷⁵

Terms that can be translated as "sage" such as *shengren* and *shengxian* had undergone significant transformations in meaning.⁷⁶ Originally, *sheng* had been used only for the ideal rulers—Confucius and the reigning emperor believed to form an axis between mankind and the universe. The meaning of the term was broadened in neo-Confucian philosophy, where it now referred to the personal perfection of the individual.⁷⁷ From the Song era onward, becoming a sage by cultivating oneself through intensive study was considered a feasible goal, but the path toward self-cultivation was conceptualized differently during the late Ming period. In many currents of Confucian thought, becoming a sage, reaching the highest level of individual maturity, was no longer thought to derive primarily from service to the state. Instead, many schools emphasized the primacy of reaching unity with

the universe. This was achieved through a search for harmony with the cosmic principle (*li*), which invested the sage with charisma and influence in the world.⁷⁸ All of this created space for the Jesuits to connect themselves with this social ideal.

Yet the question of to what degree book learning was a necessary channel for self-cultivation was a controversial topic and remained so for many centuries. During the first half of the seventeenth century, more conservative schools endorsed the idea of official education as the main path to self-completion and the sage's service to society.⁷⁹ Others took radically different, unconventional approaches that were much more focused on individual pathways. Wang Yangming, for example, stressed that the way to sagehood lay in the refinement of man's innate moral knowledge, and the Taizhou school went as far as to argue that even the most common and uneducated person was capable of attaining the highest form of human perfection.⁸⁰ Li Zhi even joked that book learning was an obstacle on the path to personal maturation.⁸¹

In Zhu's account, true self-cultivation had to be pursued via individual devotion to the Lord of Heaven. From that perspective, Zhu describes the Jesuit missionaries as supreme human beings who, through their moral authority and personal qualities, stood out from the rest of late Ming society. In his *Summary*, Zhu explicitly links Christianity to the ideal of sagehood, writing that the way to attain this highest stage of human development is through the Learning of Heaven. He takes this further by arguing that even the common people were capable of reaching this state—if they accepted the key elements of the Christian faith.⁸²

In his statements, Zhu Zongyuan contributes to a common topos in the pro-Christian literature of this period—one that was also disseminated by the European missionaries themselves. For instance, Giulio Aleni developed this approach very clearly in his *Learned Discussions at Sanshan* [Fuzhou] (*Sanshan lunxueji*).⁸³ In this work the renowned father even argues that the Chinese sages had remained within the bounds of their human possibilities, since only Christianity had the power to bring people to perfection as sages. Similarly, Matteo Ricci had earlier remarked that the true Confucian gentleman must of necessity follow the "Learning of Heaven" because of its divine origin.⁸⁴

In Zhu Zongyuan's depiction of the Jesuits, the missionaries figure as individuals who can lead China back to the ideal of the ancient three dynasties, a state of complete social harmony and general well-being. In other words, as agents of the proper teaching, the Jesuits become new wise men bringing order, peace, and prosperity to a crisis-ridden Chinese state that seemed to have lost its Way. As in Zhu's portrait of Europe, this idealization is possible because he glosses over any kind of individuality. Zhu does not mention any particular Jesuit by name or present one as a specific example at any point in his work. Zhu's choice not to introduce individual missionaries, their biographical backgrounds, their familiarity with China, and their writings cannot be put down to a distance between missionaries and Chinese Christians.⁸⁵ After all, Zhu Zongyuan was in close contact with Jesuits when he was writing the *Responses*. Neither was it unusual to publish personal information about individual missionaries in the mid-seventeenth century. For example, the converts Han Lin (1601–1644) and Zhang Geng (ca. 1560–1647) provided ninety-six profiles of Jesuit missionaries in their 1648 book *Evidence of the Christian Faith*.⁸⁶

Zhu's avoidance of depicting individual Jesuits promoted a schematization that facilitated their association with an idealized image—after all, a sociopolitical ideal usually has no individual traits. Ultimately, Zhu's missionaries do not appear as representatives of a teaching from another part of the world but as ideal Confucians. This corresponds to his desire to portray the core of Christianity not as a foreign teaching but as the divine consummation of Confucianism. Yet Zhu's possibilities of doing so were limited.

THE LIMITS OF INTEGRATION

Despite all the efforts to underline the compatibilities between Christianity and Confucianism, many aspects of the Jesuits' life and work remained radically at variance with Chinese codes. For instance, the European fathers' vow of chastity was in breach of the Confucian duty to produce offspring. And most saliently, the Jesuits were part of organizations—whether the global Catholic Church in general or

the Society of Jesus in particular—that had their centers outside the Ming or Qing state. This institutional membership distinguished the European fathers from the broad spectrum of figures in China who in other regards were comparable to them. For example, the group of Muslim scientists employed by the court in Beijing, who in the course of the seventeenth century were increasingly replaced by Jesuit experts, maintained only loose ties with the outside world of Islam.⁸⁷ Likewise, the Buddhist scholars who stressed connections with Confucianism were usually rooted only in the Chinese cultural context, without significant connections to Southeast Asia or any other region in which Buddhism was highly influential.

In his depiction of the Jesuits, Zhu Zongyuan does not deal with Catholic institutions like the priesthood, even though some of his writings suggest that he must have been familiar with them. The same is the case with Catholic symbolism, liturgy, music, and architecture—all these facets of ecclesiastical life were known to Zhu, but he does not take them up when introducing the Jesuits to his readers. He also does not elaborate on the organizational setup of the Catholic Church, whether outside or inside China. Explaining more of the institutional cultures of the *ecclesia* would likely have only added to the waves of distrust Zhu Zongyuan was trying to combat. It would have shown the limits to which the European fathers could—and wanted to—present themselves in a Confucian manner. Not only theological concerns but also many aspects of Catholicism as an organized religion stood in the way of its complete localization in China, and Zhu must have been aware of them.

In fact, under close observation, the organizational structure of the Learning of Heaven looked nothing like an adaptation to Confucian paths and patterns. Although there were some basic similarities between Christian organizations and the world of late Ming academies, the Christians, unlike the latter, maintained a profound division between clergy and common parishioners. What is more, this division ran along ethnic lines, since Chinese individuals were long barred from the sacrament of becoming a priest. During Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime, the Society of Jesus admitted Chinese individuals only at the level of coadjutor brothers, and even this was limited by strict

policies. Until the early seventeenth century, only Chinese males who had been born in Macao and educated by the Jesuits were eligible to become coadjutor brothers; after 1627 some mestizos were also allowed to join their ranks, but all of them were from Macao.⁸⁸ Only in the 1670s did the Society of Jesus begin to ease this policy.

While the admission of Chinese coadjutor brothers into the Society of Jesus was strictly restrained, only a single Chinese individual in the entire Catholic Church was ordained as a priest before Zhu Zongyuan passed away in 1660. The Dominican Luo Wenzao (1616–1691) received the sacrament of priesthood in Manila in 1654. Luo later returned to Qing China and was eventually appointed as a bishop responsible for large parts of central China,⁸⁹ but even he managed to ordain no more than a handful of Chinese priests. In that sense, not much changed in the seventeenth century—the plans for a Chinese clergy that important individuals like Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628) lobbied for in Rome never materialized.⁹⁰ Priesthood remained a European privilege, and many Jesuits were adamant about defending that system.

Similar ethnic policies characterized much of the church around the world. In seventeenth-century European colonialism and Catholicism, certain forms of ethnic consciousness went beyond simple patterns of pride, discrimination, and prejudice. In very complex—and by no means uncontested—ways they were becoming aspects of global institutional systems and thus of worldwide power constellations. This becomes particularly apparent if we regard the Catholic Church of that time as an organization that was expanding in conjunction with the Iberian and other European colonial powers. Both the globalizing church and the European empires were debating the question of what role ethnic and cultural diversity should play in an organization that was scaling up in scope, size, and complexity.

The dominant voices in these debates were seldom in favor of inclusivity in the sense that we use that term now. An individual's conversion and dedication to the Catholic cause thus did not necessarily lead to equal opportunities in the church. Instead, for most non-European converts, the path to a career in the church was full of obstacles. This pattern can be observed from the Americas to East Asia: in the

Philippines, Spanish missionaries staunchly opposed native priests; the first church councils in Mexico effectively banned all non-Europeans from the priesthood, revising this policy in 1585 to open the door to people of “mixed blood.”⁹¹ In general, “blood” was a concept with great social and political implications, and in many cases older, local discrimination patterns were now translated into global dimensions. For instance, the notion of “pure blood” (*limpieza de sangre*) had played an important role in the repeated waves of inquisitions targeting *conversos*, or “new Christians” with Jewish ancestors. These occurred initially on the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century and soon thereafter in other parts of the Portuguese Empire.⁹² In Goa, the inquisition was established in 1560 with its primary target Jews or *conversos*.⁹³ Equally problematic conceptions of blood affected indigenous peoples in many additional parts of the world, particularly when they became subjects of European-dominated structures.

For much of the early modern period, a majority in the church’s leading circles was committed to the idea of global mission but opposed to Native Americans, Africans, and Asians entering the clergy. In a sense, this combination of inclusivism and exclusivism was also reflected in the spatial arrangements of colonial cities. As in Europe, foreign or other ethnic communities tended to be segregated into distinct quarters.⁹⁴ In places like Goa and Macao, one allowed non-European individuals to rise to wealth, honor, and influence, but in general, non-European ethnicity barred a large number of successful individuals from full participation in the upper echelons of colonial society.

We should be cautious not to understand these forms of ethnic hierarchization in terms of the full-fledged racist systems of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperialism.⁹⁵ During the seventeenth century, no brutally hierarchizing science determined biologically based differences among groups.⁹⁶ Moreover, during the 1500s and 1600s, differentiation among single ethnic groups was not a matter of a consistent principle. Even in European-controlled ports like Macao or Malacca there was no rigid segregationist policy like the ones that would be possible two centuries later. In many regards, Iberian

colonial societies were more comparable to caste societies than to fully developed race societies.⁹⁷

Policies related to the question of how to deal with ethnic and cultural differences were very controversial, even within the upper echelons of globalizing institutions like the Catholic Church or the Portuguese *padroado*. For instance, in its constitutions, the Society of Jesus declared its opposition to the notion of the “purity of blood” that was so influential in the Iberian world. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, had been open to the admission of new Christians, and he supported the idea of ordaining priests in some parts of the world beyond Europe. Ignatius’s declared objectives were influenced by philosophical humanism and stemmed from a commitment to a global mission that was also culturally open. Later, a number of Jesuits, including fathers stationed in China, did not follow their society’s founder in this regard: they remained opposed to the idea of building up a local clergy.

There were times, in fact, when it seemed as if a sizable force within the Catholic Church would come to support the ordination of priests regardless of the categories of blood and cultural belonging. In the early sixteenth century, for example, both the Papacy and the Portuguese king accepted the idea of ordaining non-Europeans as priests.⁹⁸ Yet opposition to creating a multiethnic clergy remained very strong in various levels of the Catholic clergy, and consequently in most parts of the world no significant number of native Jesuit priests emerged. Between 1549 and 1773, only one South Asian man successfully made his way to priesthood in the Society of Jesus; in other parts of Asia as well as the Americas, Africa, and Oceania, native Jesuit fathers remained sparse exceptions.⁹⁹ The highest number of native ordained priests was in Japan—about fifteen in the late 1500s and early 1600s—after much debate.¹⁰⁰ But since the Japanese mission was hit by a governmental crackdown soon after, this model could not emerge as a paradigm in other parts of the world.

Moreover, the chief protagonists behind the ordination of Japanese priests were not interested in establishing a universal pattern. Alessandro Valignano, who supervised the Jesuit East Asia mission beginning in 1573 and was actively establishing Japanese seminaries

at that time, was not operating from the idea of human equality. In some of his writings, he referred to the “dark races” as “stupid and vicious,” but he identified the Japanese as “white”—an intended honor he also conferred upon the Chinese.¹⁰¹ And he knew this classification was controversial—as Valignano himself mentioned, many Europeans, particularly Portuguese missionaries, found the latter idea hard to bear since they regarded Japanese and Chinese as “blacks.”¹⁰²

The reasons many missionaries resisted the prospect of Chinese candidates for the priesthood did not necessarily center on ethnic prejudice. They feared that Chinese individuals attending seminaries in Asia could not possibly be educated to a degree sufficient to join the Society of Jesus in Europe. Many Jesuit fathers—as well as other influential figures in the Catholic Church—were skeptical the Chinese could study subjects such as theology, philosophy, and European science in sufficient depth. Moreover, they were not convinced that Chinese translations could replace the Latin texts, and for the time being, Chinese versions of European works were in short supply. Many Jesuits were particularly uneasy about whether the Chinese fathers could acquire proficiency in Latin, the *lingua franca* of the upper echelons of the Catholic *ecclesia*. Attempts to lower the standards for Chinese priests received little support, and the idea of dispatching sizable numbers of talented young converts to European seminaries proved hard to translate into action.¹⁰³ In the eyes of many fathers, and perhaps also in their hearts, Latin remained the language of the priesthood. A genuinely multicultural clergy that did not share the same theological *lingua franca* seemed to these fathers like an erosion of the spiritual and intellectual fundaments of their religion.

Jesuits who opposed the idea of Chinese converts joining their ranks as priests made other arguments as well. Some European missionaries were concerned that native priests would not fit neatly into the centralized system that characterized the Society of Jesus as a globalizing organization. A few fathers suggested that a native clergy would be subject to Chinese social hierarchies that would challenge their standing in Christian communities. They were disquieted by the prospect of native priests taking independent action or reaching out to Chinese society in ways that could not be managed or controlled by Rome or

Macao. In this connection, some Jesuits pointed to experiences with Japan, where, in their view, some native priests had proven to be not as reliable as they would have expected from a European father. Many Jesuits defined their society as a global network that relied heavily on clear lines of command, which, they opined, could be better enforced if they were not composed of a multicultural and multiethnic body. In other words, the idea of a globally diverse priesthood was often perceived as a potential erosion of a community of trust the society had built.

For many important Jesuit and other missionaries, even as they were taking their faith to all corners of the world, Catholicism remained centered on Rome. In spite of global missionary ambitions—or perhaps precisely as part of them—there was a great reluctance to rely on a non-European clergy to uphold the mission, and this stance also affected the Chinese theater of the Society of Jesus. While as theologians most Jesuits approved of a Confucian reinterpretation of Christianity as the Learning of Heaven, they continued to be loyal to their European homelands in terms of political, ethnic, and cultural belonging. A majority of the fathers were particularly concerned that in organizational terms, their religion would be diluted into a sinicized Learning of Heaven.

All this remained an unresolved tension in the history of seventeenth-century Catholicism in China, a tension that went through individuals like Zhu Zongyuan who were well aware of many problematic aspects of ecclesiastical life. Apparently unable to bridge this gap between the Europe-centered aspects of Catholicism and its claim to nativization in China, Zhu chose to paint Europe and the Jesuits exclusively in the vivid colors of Confucian ideals. This may have been a solution to philosophical and theological problems, but Zhu surely must have felt that the organizational challenges surrounding Jesuit Catholicism in China were more complex.

EPILOGUE

DISCORDANT HARMONIES

Global history does not necessarily abandon detailed local perspectives for the sake of large-scale thinking. Global historians also do not merely write the history of mobility or unchained connectivity. Great interconnections affected not only travelers but also the vast majority of people living sedentary lives: in seventeenth-century China, many individuals experienced the transcontinental transfer of ideas, goods, and germs. They include the Chinese peasant who started planting sweet potatoes and the urban dweller who became a tobacco smoker—as well as they and many others when it became harder to pay taxes because of globally shifting silver prices. Transcontinental linkages remained the unknown cause of such transformations even as newly available information about different parts of the world reached Chinese society, particularly the educated circles. Yet while many late Ming readers were avid consumers of geographical knowledge, they seldom ventured to distant lands. The same is true for the converts to foreign religions—including Christianity—who were increasing relatively quickly owing to the sociopolitical crises of early seventeenth-century China. Although such religions had an impact on the lives of their followers, they did not necessarily add much kinetic energy to them.

Historically speaking, the spread of a foreign religion in China was not out of the ordinary. More unusual was the steady presence of European missionaries on Chinese soil, from the late sixteenth century onward. This not only led to a wealth of exchanges between learned individuals from both parts of the world but also meant that a significant number of Chinese individuals—whether they lived in the countryside or in a large city—came into direct contact with a foreign organization: the global Catholic church. Of course, Christianity had existed in China before: Nestorians had been present there around the seventh century, and the Catholic Church had founded some missionary outlets during the Mongol period (1279–1368), when travel across the Eurasian landmass was facilitated by their powerful rule. But at no point in history had Christian communities in China been so closely wedded to an institutional network that was becoming a global organization. Under the umbrella of the Catholic Church, many Chinese were now in regular contact with European priests who functioned not only as individual missionaries but also as representatives, administrators, and regional principals of a large institution. The Chinese dealing directly with Europeans remained deeply rooted in their home society and politics—even intellectually, floating into a detached world beyond local commitments was not an option.

Zhu Zongyuan was among the Chinese Christians who played a somewhat exalted role between the upper levels of the Jesuit China mission and his local society. His successes in the Chinese state examination system gave him prestige in his hometown, Ningbo, and ensured that he had close connections with that city's Confucian circles. At the same time, he was an active member of the local Christian communities; he regularly corresponded with European missionaries and even hosted many in person. Moreover, he coauthored a number of texts with both Chinese converts and Jesuits, and his works contain prefaces written by members of both groups. While the one documented trip in his lifetime took him only from Ningbo to the provincial capital of Hangzhou, about three hundred fifty *li* to the west (175 kilometers), we nevertheless need to count him as one of the trans-continental connectors of his time.

Zhu was both a subject of the Chinese state and its education system and someone with responsibilities vis-à-vis the Jesuit

subprovince of China as well as the *ecclesia catholica* at large. But he was more than a liaison between seventeenth-century Catholicism and Chinese society in the Ming-Qing transition period: he was among those learned Chinese Christians seeking to come to terms with the foreign dimensions of their faith rather than downplay them. Unlike most other convert-authors in seventeenth-century China, Zhu discussed an entire range of problems resulting from the European origins of Catholicism in an unusually open and detailed manner. He spoke against allegations that the Jesuit fathers were the vanguard of a European invasion and presented an image of Europe that was compatible with his own agenda. What is more, he spent much of his scholarly energy arguing that Confucian ideals were not inseparable from the Chinese state and society and hence could also be put into effect through other teachings. Like many Chinese converts, Zhu was convinced that in their essential values and highest aspirations, Confucianism as the Chinese state ethos and Catholicism as the Learning of Heaven were ultimately one and the same.

Thus Zhu had loyalties to two institutionalized worlds—and he believed they could and should be brought together. To be sure, there were developments on both sides working in favor of a synthesis. For instance, certain neo-Confucian and Latin Christian schools during the seventeenth century put a great emphasis on individual moral responsibility and the emancipation from older institutionalized forms of authority.¹ We do not need to go as far as the world historians William McNeill and John R. McNeill, who labeled Luther the German Wang Yangming,² but we can agree that the rising emphasis on individual conscience was related to an increase in commercialization, urbanization, and literacy in both China and Europe from the sixteenth century onward. In addition, roughly around the same time there was a drawn-out crisis of teachings closely associated with state apparatuses—not only in parts of Europe and East Asia but also in the Middle East and South Asia.

Nevertheless, Zhu Zongyuan's world of dual affiliations was not a harmonic, fully congruent one. Many contradictions remained in the intellectual and organizational edifice of the Learning of Heaven, including the Confucian-Christian accommodation. Yet even as a scholarly framework, this had not emerged from an intellectually

independent cross-cultural dialogue between Europeans and Chinese, nor was it simply a Christian adaptation to Chinese realities on the ground. Instead, it was born from friction: we need to see it as a discordant compromise resulting from the encounter of two large systems—the globalizing Catholic Church and the Chinese state, both of which were characterized by their own cultural imperatives³ and hegemonic claims and which had core principles that could not be transgressed without sanction.

Without doubt, these cultural imperatives were not monolithic blocks. Indeed, both the Chinese state and the Catholic Church were facing their own crises: During the late Ming dynasty, the shaky conditions of the state loosened the ties between many Confucian schools and the bureaucratic system, creating new opportunities for alternative interpretations, one of which was the Learning of Heaven. At the same time, the pluralization of Confucianism opened up arenas of contestation. Nor was the Catholic Church under the challenges of the Reformation a world of peace and harmony: orders from the Franciscans to the Jesuits were engaged in institutional and theological confrontations, and even within single orders, there was a wide range of opinions about how to shape main arenas such as the China mission.

Nevertheless, the inner diversities of both late Ming China and the *Societas Jesu* did not mean that contacts between the two could take any possible direction. Both the Catholic Church and the Chinese state had boundaries that could not be transgressed without penalty and core principles that could not be compromised. In seventeenth-century China, Confucian circles retained their claim to being ultimately responsible for the welfare of China as a political, societal, and cultural system. More purist Confucian schools were staunchly opposed to influences from any other teaching, particularly to religions from outside China. Moreover, the state apparatus was always a potential source of repression. Highly educated Christian converts were especially constrained by Confucian orthodoxies and orthodoxies, including participation in state-endorsed rituals that could not be abandoned without the risk of political persecution. Many watchful eyes inside and outside China's official channels observed

the language and behavior of Chinese converts and European missionaries—who were repeatedly subject to state sanctions and political retribution.

On the Catholic side, European missionaries were concerned that the localization of Christianity would go too far. Books on the Learning of Heaven, no matter whether they were authored primarily by missionaries or by converts, could not explore a range of theological choices without any constraints; instead, they were checked by their compatibility with the doctrines of the church in general and of the Society of Jesus in particular. Moreover, the Jesuit fathers set up an administrative system that attempted to ensure that core elements of the Catholic faith and liturgy were being practiced throughout China. This system depended heavily on Chinese associates, but for a variety of reasons, throughout Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime the road to priesthood remained barred to Chinese individuals. Although there were only a few dozen Jesuit fathers stationed in China at any one time, they formed a network at the top of the very diverse landscape of converts in China and saw it as their task to ensure that Chinese Catholics did not transgress the boundaries acceptable to Rome.

Ethnic consciousness played a role in the seventeenth-century China mission, and so did entanglements between the church and European colonialism.⁴ Nevertheless, the mind-sets framing late Ming Christianity differed greatly from those of the age of Western imperialism two centuries later. The same was true of the global power constellations shaping the encounters leading to the reformulation of Catholicism as the Learning of Heaven. The latter remained a relatively small teaching from the West that had converted a minor proportion of the overall population. It also interested a part of China's educated circles—however, chiefly through scientific and cartographic works. During the seventeenth century, Sino-European contacts did not take place in a climate of opinion favoring the idea of the West as advanced and China as lagging behind.

Connectors like Zhu Zongyuan found themselves positioned in the middle of two power structures, one of which was centered at the Dragon Throne and the other at the Holy See. Both the late Ming state and society and the Catholic Church had control mechanisms and

ways of ensuring doctrinal coherence, which meant that the synthesis resulting from this encounter could be defined only along a fine line of theological, liturgical, and organizational possibilities—a fine line that ran along a zone in which the two systems could converse in the spirit of mutual acceptance. We should not downplay the intellectual fervor, spiritual devotion, and cultural openness of the missionaries and Chinese scholars involved in creating the intellectual framework in which Confucianism and Catholicism could meet. Yet we should also recognize that outside this specific framework there were no fundamental alternatives, particularly for an order like the Society of Jesus that sought to gain acceptance within the higher levels of the Chinese state.

The encounters conditioning the history of seventeenth-century Christianity in China were so complex that it would be misleading to define them as interreligious dialogues. On an institutional level, we should not assume that there were simple analogies between the Chinese and Catholic sides engaged in the Learning of Heaven. First, the organizational setup of the Catholic Church was by no means akin to the landscapes of Confucian schools, and second a much wider range of players, including state institutions, were involved on the Chinese side. Independent of this difference, it is also somewhat questionable to apply the concept of “religions” to the contexts of late Ming society since the distinction between religious faith and nonreligious thought, between *philosophia* and *religio*, was peculiar to monotheistic religions, particularly the worlds of Latin Christendom.⁵ Although the Jesuit missionaries interpreted the landscapes of contemporary Chinese schools through these lenses, the reality was far more complex.⁶

What are the alternatives to situating Zhu’s life and work in a history of encounters between religions? One possibility is to operate with the term “civilization” instead. In fact, the history of the Jesuit mission in China has often been portrayed as a contact between different cultures or civilizations. Yet we still need to be cautious, because concepts like “culture” and “civilization” are also constructs of the modern age.⁷ This is particularly the case if we apply them to entire world regions and at least implicitly treat concepts like

“Chinese civilization” or “European culture” as coherent or even uniform bodies. The notion of intercivilizational contacts tends to downplay the inner diversity of each side, the reality that world regions like Europe and China were actually pluriverses.

Perhaps more important, this conceptualization suggests that the Catholic China mission opened a stream of mutual, open contact between China and Europe. Assuming this, however, would mean ignoring the fact that the information flows between the two regions were channeled by a very limited number of agents. In China, knowledge about Europe depended almost entirely on the works of Jesuit missionaries. Granted, their writings were not confined to religious contents but also encompassed other fields of intellectual activity, ranging from astronomy to geography and from science to mnemotechnics.⁸ Yet the fathers never aimed at disseminating a comprehensive image of Europe in China,⁹ offering only a fraction of the rich world of ideas found in the booming European book market.¹⁰ Nor were they interested in providing a realistic portrait of the Europe they knew. Their goal, after all, was not to feed material into a burgeoning intercultural dialogue but to proselytize for their faith.

Only greatly reduced and highly filtered information about Europe reached the Chinese public, including converts like Zhu Zongyuan. In all likelihood, Zhu did not know much about either the Reformation or the Thirty Years’ War that raged in Europe during his lifetime. He was also probably unaware of the fact that the ongoing religious wars in Europe had begun to undermine the idea that religion was the crucial source of morality and political stability. Moreover, probably no one had alerted him to the reality that the increased knowledge of other cultures available in parts of Europe was feeding into a growing insecurity about mankind’s unity under a Christian God. And certainly he was unaware of thinkers like René Descartes (1596–1650), who wrote around the same time and postulated *scientia* and rationality as the only remaining roads to stability, given that ecclesiastical and political institutions had been thrown into turmoil. Most likely, Zhu was also ignorant of the fact that orders like the Society of Jesus were reaching out globally in part because of the crisis of their church in Europe. In all probability, Zhu had no information about the vicious

struggles within the Catholic Church and the mounting attacks against the Jesuits from groups like the Jansenists in France.

However, it would also be wrong to regard Zhu Zongyuan as a scholar ready to engage in cross-cultural reflections who was hindered only by the sparse information available to him. While the Europe of his time was undergoing important transformations, most probably Zhu Zongyuan would have not been keen on acquiring a broad knowledge of this distant continent's history, society, and intellectual life. With his publications, Zhu did not intend to build bridges in an intercultural encounter, and it was not his aim to provide or obtain a maximum of facts and figures about this other realm.

Indeed, his books and essays were not meant to be translated into other languages. They were written in Mandarin, and at the same time they were enriched by a world of concepts, ideas, and allusions accessible only to a reader who had climbed comparatively high on the Chinese, particularly Confucian, educational ladder. Zhu Zongyuan was writing from a late Ming world that was experiencing major turmoil, climate disasters, and political unrest, and he was looking for a way to stabilize that world. For him, the dogmas brought to China's shores by Jesuit missionaries were a key to reinvigorating Confucian learning, stabilizing society and calming the political storms of his time.

WORLDS OF CONTEXT

In what historical contexts can we place Zhu Zongyuan, given that he never traveled? As we have seen, we can view him through the lenses of local history as well as situating him in the wider context of Chinese history during the Ming-Qing transition period. Beyond that, his activities as a writer and Christian community member belong to the history of Catholicism as a globalizing institution. In addition, his experience fits into a much broader historical context: global religious expansion and intercultural encounters.

Long before the arrival of the Jesuits, many religions had been disseminated throughout large parts of Asia. Some branches of

Buddhism and Islam, for example, had begun to spread over wide geographical distances. The fourteenth-century explorer Ibn Battutah moved widely within Muslim communities in his voyages between northern Africa and China.¹¹ In places like Mughal India, different religions and ancient written traditions were coming into contact on a scale, magnitude, and depth that in various regards would outmatch the seventeenth-century encounters between Chinese and Europeans. In these cases as well, cross-cultural contacts stimulated a wealth of erudite debates and nourished new landscapes of religious syncretism. Already during that time, many people found themselves in the role of connectors, interlocutors, and negotiators between traditions and societies. Like Zhu Zongyuan, they experienced the implications of an increasingly interconnected world in a very direct manner, and all of them had to come to terms with them in one way or another.

Nevertheless, the European missionaries were not simply joining a historically colorful but now static religious landscape in Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During that period, many kinds of intercultural contacts were actually intensifying, particularly along the major Asian trade arteries. For instance, during the seventeenth century Chinese Buddhist missionaries were becoming active in large parts of Southeast Asia, often traveling—just like European priests—with merchants they could rely on.¹² Moreover, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Islam experienced a period of strong growth, its second after a first wave of expansion between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries. In this second wave, new followers of Muhammad, Allah, and the Koran were being created in very different parts of the world, ranging from sub-Saharan Africa to Iran and from the Balkans to present-day Indonesia. Both waves of religious expansion and outreach led to sustained learned exchanges among representatives from different world regions.

To be sure, there were significant differences in the paths and patterns through which Islam and Catholicism spread during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nevertheless, a closer look at the proliferation of both makes us recognize some shared patterns and even entanglements. For instance, in large parts of Asia, the two religions spread via close connections between missionary and

commercial activities.¹³ Christian missionaries traveled with European merchants just as Sufi and other Muslim itinerants accompanied traders of Arab and other backgrounds. Moreover, just as with their European peers, Muslim merchant networks sometimes pressured rulers of local trade hubs to convert. And like Christianity, Islam could provide communities of trust and credit to fellow religious travelers and traders in distant lands.¹⁴ Many economic associations were held together across vast distances by a shared allegiance to either the Bible or the Koran.

We may even go one step further and interpret the growth of Islam and Catholicism during this time against the background of the growing significance of merchant cultures and psychologies in the wider Indian Ocean world. It is perhaps little wonder that in an age of increased competition and personal pressures, particularly religions that accentuated individual salvation rapidly gained followers.¹⁵ Moreover, religions with strongholds in many different locations were appealing to an ever-more mobile world in which many local cultural traditions were being relativized while at the same time the demand for reliable transregional networks was growing.¹⁶ As the lived experiences of many individuals—particularly in trade-intensive coastal regions—began to cover greater distances, the demand for an equally widespread faith network grew as well.

Yet no matter whether in the case of Islam or Christianity, the growth of religious communities across a colorful landscape of societies and languages did not dispel cultural differences. In fact, religious syncretism and attempts at intercultural reconciliation were far from unusual during this period. Now that religions were large webs, they faced new challenges, particularly the question of how they could maintain an equilibrium between universal divine claims on the one hand and, on the other, locally specific political demands and cultural realities. Both Christian and Islamic communities saw the emergence of debates on the relationship between the universal and the particular. In both cases, there were tensions between those branches that were more open to religious syncretism and those that adhered to a narrower, more rigid interpretation of their faith.¹⁷

Among Islamic groups, it was particularly the Sufi missionaries who endorsed forms of religious syncretism that reconciled Islam

with Buddhist, Hindu, and other elements. And on the other side, many seventeenth-century religious travelers sought to return various Muslim communities along the Indian Ocean rim to versions of Islam that were understood as normative. These groups tried to counter the fragmentation of their religion into different culturally specific communities that could challenge the idea of a universal *umma*.

In this connection, the struggles over the accommodation policy in the Jesuit China mission, particularly the famous Rites Controversy, can be understood as an instance of a much larger pattern describing multiple religions around this time. Like Christians, Muslims were faced with different camps arguing over local adaptations of their faith, over the limits of accommodation to local customs and traditions. In many cases, the feuding groups then appealed to a superordinate religious authority to serve as a final judge. An example is a letter from a seventeenth-century Sumatran scholar who consulted his teacher in Medina to resolve a theological dispute.¹⁸

Yet no matter on what side one stood on the question of cultural accommodation, it was an undeniable fact that religious identities were increasingly embedded in universal worldviews rather than tied to particular locales.¹⁹ In turn, these transformations in religious worldviews were conjoined with changing understandings of the human habitat. In Japan and Portugal, India and Vietnam, there was a growing sense of a finite world, at least within learned circles. In many languages, new vocabularies of universalism reflected the experience of a world that was simultaneously getting larger and smaller.²⁰ Newly available knowledge about other cultures could even lead to epistemological crises and religious problems. A famous example is the struggle among European scholars to reconcile facts from Chinese historical records with the important genre of European universal histories based on Christian timelines. What was to be done with the events registered in Chinese sources that obviously predated the most common computations of biblical events such as the deluge?²¹ It took much time and effort to recalculate biblical chronologies in a way that made them compatible with Chinese primary sources.

The task of balancing universal and particular claims was not confined to the realms of knowledge and faith: it had parallels in the economic and technological sectors, for the expanding worlds of

economic gain confronted established local concepts, measures, and conventions;²² at the same time they created a need for commonly accepted standards. Furthermore, technological skills and governmental practices were spreading across a wide range of societies. It is not possible to clearly disentangle the social carrier groups of new technical knowledge and religious faith, in part because, in an age of intensifying elite circulation, the employment of experts at foreign courts was fairly common.²³ As a general trend, in large parts of Asia there was an increasing demand for foreign advisers; this was driven partly by the realization that more functional bureaucracies would help advance a state's position in the complicated game of international commerce and competition. Especially after the 1550s, rulers in many regions began recruiting experts for commercial, scientific, technological, and military activities. Some built on traditions established by earlier nomadic empires and their heirs. For instance, the Mughal court in India under Akbar (d. 1605), one of its greatest rulers, employed not only Jesuits but also Sufis, Shiites, and other highly skilled individuals who adhered openly to different Gods from the majority population and often had missionary ambitions.²⁴

Once again, when looking at a much wider pattern, the Jesuits working in the service of the Chinese emperor no longer seem so unusual. In fact, their service in the Forbidden City should be seen as part of a broader development that transgressed religions and was common across Asia. Serving as skilled labor, the Jesuits were supplying several rulers with a wide range of technologies and scientific knowledge. This included the introduction of field artillery, which around the middle of the seventeenth century helped states like China and the Mughal Empire grow at the expense of smaller states. Like many of their Muslim counterparts, the members of the Society of Jesus who served as foreign experts were not interested primarily in monetary compensation. Instead, they hoped to gain privileged access to the cream of local society and create direct inroads for their faith.

Since missionaries, experts, and traders from different religious backgrounds were operating at the same time, they encountered one another. This was less so in the larger provinces of empires like China and India but very much so in trading centers like Goa, Malacca,

Guangzhou, and Nagasaki. Most long-distance travelers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries needed to stop at such places to change ships or wait for favorable winds. Port cities of this kind offered vivid scenes of multicultural coexistence—scenes of a magnitude unknown in Europe at the time.²⁵ Here human beings from very different backgrounds and faith systems—Fujianese, Gujaratis, Arabs, and Armenians, to name only a few—lived with one another, sometimes in a culturally open atmosphere.²⁶ For instance, in Macao and other Portuguese strongholds, Europeans married predominantly Chinese women, thus the number of residents of mixed ethnic backgrounds rose continually. Arab merchants also frequently intermarried with local families, often passing their religion on to the next generations. Still, many belonged to diasporic networks knit by shared ethnicities, religions, homelands, or ancestors and served as transregional communities of trust in a trading world as colorful as it was ruthless.²⁷

The dynamism in the cultural and religious pluriverse of maritime Asia was known to European traders and missionaries. As the Jesuit fathers made their way to China, they would have observed not only the great religious cohabitation in these trading hubs but also the rapid growth of Islam.²⁸ There is evidence that at times Jesuits engaged in debates with Muslim scholars in the intercultural hubs along the Indian Ocean rim.²⁹ They also had some disputations with Muslim scholars in China; however, here both Christianity and Islam were in a much more marginal position, leading to far fewer encounters between these two monotheistic traditions.³⁰ In addition, there are records of disputes between Jesuit fathers and Buddhist scholars in parts of China and Southeast Asia, where Chan Buddhism also experienced a missionary boom.³¹

The Jesuits were well aware of the fact that religious dynamism did not transform all regions of Asia equally and unequivocally. They observed that compared with the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean or parts of Japan, Chinese society provided much less fertile soil for the spread of monotheistic religions. In the end, despite all the crises during the drawn-out transition phase from the Ming to the Qing dynasty, the Middle Kingdom remained a centrally administered state and the largest economy on the planet. Its civilizational patterns were not

shaken enough to trigger the Chinese masses to undertake a search for new gods or new spiritual strongholds. And among traders, the diasporic Chinese networks usually remained strong enough to provide trust, shelter, and opportunities in distant lands—which reduced pressure and incentives for an individual merchant to convert to religions such as Islam or Christianity.

Yet the failed ambitions of early modern European missionaries to transform China into a chiefly Christian society do not indicate a uniquely inward-facing society. Quite the contrary, with visible communities of Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and other believers, the patterns of religiosity in the Ming or Qing state were far more colorful and globally entangled than those in Europe during the same period. In the Catholic lands between Lisbon and Warsaw, the presence of such overseas proselytizers would have been unthinkable. Rome struggled with how much to concede culturally when globalizing Catholicism, but it would not have allowed Muslim, let alone Buddhists or followers of other foreign beliefs, to build missionary networks in Europe. The same was true for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant rulers and churches. In terms of its religious tolerance, China was thus more similar to formations like the Mughal Empire or the Ottoman Empire than to the world of Latin Christendom, which in its own homelands was far from accepting global religious pluralism.³²

Through their personal experiences, Jesuit and other missionaries in several Asian regions must have been aware of the wider religious dynamics characterizing the time—dynamics that spanned entire oceans and continents, just like the individual missionary's life. Perhaps Jesuit fathers deployed in the Far East were actually more aware of transcontinental currents and entanglements than the modern scholars studying those missionaries are today, for the latter have been trained chiefly as regional experts, whereas the early modern missionaries needed to act and interact in networks that crossed cultures and continents. Moreover, neither the Jesuits in China nor their Chinese interlocutors perceived the other side as a detached, exotic realm; nor did they assume that the contacts resulting from the arrival of European missionaries in the Ming state were exceptional in any major regard.

The striking parallels in the spread of Christianity, Islam, and other religions across parts of early modern Eurasia should not lead us to assume that different faith systems and religious organizations were growing more similar to one another. Certainly, Islamic and Christian networks faced largely equivalent challenges in their transcultural expansion, and we can observe to some degree comparable responses across various creeds. However, there was no significant convergence in the ways in which a particular religion like Theravada Buddhism, Sunni Islam, or Catholicism, including its branches, was organized.

Since each religious web during the epoch had distinctive features, the discussion of which religion was unique wouldn't lead into promising directions. What was particular about Catholic missionary efforts was the global scope of their organization, which was based on great administrative capacities and specialized personnel. This also differentiated Catholicism from Protestant and other branches of Christianity, which for a variety of reasons were slower to embark on global proselytizing endeavors.³³ During Zhu Zongyuan's lifetime, no other religion operated with proselytizers from Patagonia to Hokkaido and from Baja California to Bali.³⁴ While these missionary enterprises were not centrally coordinated, they were clearly part of a centrally organized institution, the Catholic Church. Yet as the case of the seventeenth-century China mission indicates, this central organization was not necessarily a source of coherence and prowess when it came to gaining new converts.

Zhu Zongyuan could not possibly have grasped even a fraction of the global dimensions surrounding his lived experiences negotiating between China and the globalizing church. Yet he must have felt the shock waves triggered by such large systems coming into direct contact with one another. He knew of the repeated attacks on the Learning of Heaven by some local scholars and state authorities, and he probably witnessed some of the internal disputes among European missionaries, who did not always agree about how to proceed with the China mission. He certainly noticed ecclesiastical policies, including the fact that Chinese converts remained barred from the priesthood.

But we cannot tell exactly how he felt about them—he left only monographs, essays, and introductory writings; we have no personal

data, no letters, diaries, or autobiographical notes. So we do not know about Zhu Zongyuan's feelings and private thoughts. We cannot say how he perceived his multiple roles as a connector between local politics and his Christian communities, or between Chinese society and European missionaries. Did he feel burdened by them, or did he enthusiastically serve in these capacities, convinced that this was his personal mission, his singular contribution to the world?

92. On the latter, see Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 310.
93. On attacks against Buddhism because of its foreign origins, see the classic account of Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 1:264.
94. There are additional similarities between early Buddhist groups and seventeenth-century Chinese Christians. For instance, both worked in mixed teams to translate important works into Chinese. For this aspect of early Buddhism, see Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2012), 217.
95. For a translation and contextualization of this text, see John P. Keenan, *How Master Mou Removes Our Doubts: A Reader-Response Study and Translation of the "Mou-tzu Li-huo lun"* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).
96. *Hongmingji*, III, 17.3–21.3. See (on the mentioning of You Yu) Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 1:266–68.
97. *Lihuolun* 1 (*Hongmingji* I, 3, 3, 21). On idealized depictions of India during the early phase of Buddhism in China, see Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, "Ausdehnung der Welt und innerer Zerfall (3. bis 8. Jahrhundert)," in Bauer, *China und die Fremden*, 77–113; see especially 105–10.
98. Bol, "Geography and Culture."
99. Rawski, *Early Modern China*, 188–94; Q. Edward Wang, "History, Space, and Ethnicity: The Chinese Worldview," *Journal of World History* 10, no. 2 (1999): 285–305.
100. Achim Mittag, "Scribe in the Wilderness: The Manchu Conquest and the Loyal-Hearted Historiographer's (*xinshi*) Mission," *Oriens Extremus* 44 (2003 / 2004): 27–42.
101. Even in other parts of East Asia, there were debates on similar themes. See Rawski, *Early Modern China*, 188–224.
102. Henry Em, *The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013), 28–29.
103. On Zhu's position vis-à-vis the Manchus, see, in the present volume, chapter 1, the section "Finding One's Way During Stormy Times."

5. EUROPEAN ORIGINS ON TRIAL

1. Gabriele Foccardi, *The Chinese Travelers of the Ming Period* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 150.
2. R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 187–216. On the idealized accounts of single nations, see, for example, Shenwen Li, "Les jésuites et l'image de la France en Chine aux 17e et 18e siècles," in *Entre Mer de Chine et Europe: Migrations des savoirs*,

- transfert des connaissances, transmission des sagesse du 17e au 21e siècle*, ed. Paul Servais, 41–57 (Louvain-la-Neuve, Bel.: Bruyant-Academia, 2011). On the changing connotations of the concept of “Europe,” see Robert Richmond Ellis, *They Need Nothing: Hispanic-Asian Encounters of the Colonial Period* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 12–13.
3. Timothy Brook, “Europaeology? On the Difficulty of Assembling a Knowledge of Europe in China,” in *Christianity and Cultures: Japan and China in Comparison, 1543–1644*, ed. M. Antoni J. Üçerler, 261–85 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2010), see particularly 269–72.
 4. Erik Zürcher, “The Jesuit Mission in Fujian in Late Ming Times: Levels of Response,” in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E. B. Vermeer, 417–57 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), see especially 426.
 5. R. Bin Wong, “The Search for European Differences and Domination in the Early Modern World: A View from Asia,” *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 447–469, particularly 449–58.
 6. Feng Xianliang, “Mingqing jiangnan de fumin jieceng jiqi shehui yingxiang” [The wealthy social strata and their social influence in the Jiangnan region during the Ming-Qing period], *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu* 1 (2003): 44–56.
 7. Zheng Yangwen, *China on the Sea: How the Maritime World Shaped Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
 8. Wang Gungwu, “Sojourning: The Chinese Experience in Southeast Asia,” in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid and Kristine Alilunas Rodgers, 1–14 (St. Leonards, Austral.: Allen and Unwin, 1996).
 9. Charles Parker, *Global Interactions in the Early Modern World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 137–43.
 10. John E. Wills Jr., “Maritime Europe and the Ming,” in *China and Maritime Europe, 1500–1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions*, ed. John E. Wills Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24. On the history of Chinese maritime interactions, see Angela Schottenhammer, “The Sea as Barrier and Contact Zone: Maritime Space and Sea Routes in Traditional Chinese Books and Maps,” in *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak, 3–13 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006). For a general history of overseas Chinese, see Wang Gungwu, *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).
 11. Wills, *China and Maritime Europe*; Roderich Ptak, *China and the Asian Seas: Trade, Travel and Visions of the Other (1400–1750)* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998).
 12. Nigel Cameron, *Barbarians and Mandarins: Thirteen Centuries of Western Travelers in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 138, 142, 144. See also John

- E. Wills Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622-1681* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 7-8.
13. Zhang Xie, *Dongxiyang kao* [Investigation of the eastern and western seas] (1617; repr., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981). Translation of the pertinent passages can be found in Foccardi, *Chinese Travelers*, 136-40. On the massacres of the Chinese, see John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 144-46, and Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of a Global World* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 96, 177.
14. Pasquale M. d'Elia, ed., *Fonti Ricciane: Documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l'Europa e la Cina* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1949): 2:372-73.
15. Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Regarding Chinese slaves in Goa, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia: A Political and Economic History*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 240.
16. On high taxes imposed by the Dutch and a massacre of the Chinese population in 1652, see Johannes Huber, "Chinese Settlers against the Dutch East India Company: The Rebellion Led by Kuo Huai-i on Taiwan in 1652," in Vermeer, *Development and Decline*, 265-96, see particularly 265-73. Suggesting that this colonial violence prompted Dutch ethnographers to emphasize their own individuality and the uncivilized behavior of others: Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Forcing the Doors of Heathendom: Ethnography, Violence, and the Dutch East India Company," in *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World*, ed. Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley, 131-54 (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).
17. George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), 184-85.
18. Cameron, *Barbarians and Mandarins*, 219; Kingsley Bolton, *Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126-29.
19. Walter Demel, *Als Fremde in China: Das Reich der Mitte im Spiegel frühneuzeitlicher europäischer Reiseberichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 86.
20. Wong, "Search for European Differences," 458-59.
21. Brook, *Vermeer's Hat*, 96.
22. Nonetheless, many commercial enterprises were run by the Jesuits in East Asia at little or no profit, with the chief objective of establishing good relations with the local upper classes. On the Jesuits' financial activities in the seventeenth century, see Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 552.

23. Erik Zürcher, "The First Anti-Christian Movement in China (Nanjing, 1616–1621)," in *Acta Orientalia Neerlandica: Proceedings of the Congress of the Dutch Oriental Society Held in Leiden on the Occasion of Its 50th Anniversary, 8th–9th May 1970*, ed. Pieter W. Pestman, 188–95 (Leiden: Brill Archive, 1971), see especially 190; Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 47. See also Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 111.
24. Cameron, *Barbarians and Mandarins*, 143–46.
25. Wills, "Maritime Europe," 52, 67–75.
26. Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 117–19. On the events of 1606 in general, see C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 269. See also Zhang Xinglang, ed., *Zhongxi jiaotong shiliao huibian* [A collection of materials on Sino-Western exchanges] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 145.
27. Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 105–40. See also Douglas C. Lancashire, "Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth Century China," *Church History* 38 (1969): 218–241, particularly 240–41.
28. Edward Thomas Kelly, "The Anti-Christian Persecution of 1616–1617 in Nanking" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1971), 36. It was indeed part of Ricci's mission strategy to distribute gifts, but he was probably adapting to Chinese traditions. See John D. Young, *East-West Synthesis: Matteo Ricci and Confucianism* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1980), 19–20.
29. The text was included in the *Shengchao poxieji* [The sacred dynasty's collection of writings exposing heterodoxy]. This collection was first published in 1639—the specific passage can be found in *Poxieji* III, 30b and 31b. A reprint is in Xu Changzhi and Xia Guiqi, eds., *Shengchao poxieji* [The sacred dynasty's collection of writings exposing heterodoxy] (Hong Kong: Jiandao shenxueyuan, 1996). The English translation cited can be found in Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, 131.
30. Zhang Qiong, *Making the New World Their Own: Chinese Encounters with Jesuit Science in the Age of Discovery* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 314–17. See also Adrian Dudink, "Nangong shudu (1620), Poxie ji (1640), and Western Reports on the Nanjing Persecution (1616?/1617)," *Monumenta Serica* 48 (2000): 133–265.
31. Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der europäischen Expansion, Band 1: Die Alte Welt bis 1818* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1983), 84; Boxer, *Christian Century in Japan*, 257.
32. Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 31; Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 224.

33. This topic is taken up in chapter 1 of the present volume, in the section "Finding One's Way during Stormy Times."
34. Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, trans. Douglas Lancashire, Peter Hu Kuo-chen, and Edward Malatesta (San Francisco: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), paragraphs 520–60. See also Brook, "Europaeology?," 269–72.
35. Erik Zürcher, "A Complement to Confucianism: Christianity and Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China," in *Norms and the State in China*, ed. Chun-Chieh Huang and Erik Zürcher, 71–92 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), see particularly 77; Erik Zürcher, "Giulio Aleni et ses relations avec le milieu des lettrés chinois au XVIIe siècle," in *Venezia e l'Oriente*, ed. Lionello Lanciotti, 107–35 (Florence: Olschki, 1987), see especially 122. On Aleni's idealization of the West, see Bernard Hung-Kay Luk, "A Serious Matter of Life and Death: Learned Conversations at Foochow in 1627," in *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582–1773*, ed. Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh, 173–206 (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982), see in particular 193; John L. Mish, "Creating an Image of Europe for China: Aleni's *Hsi-Fang Ta Wen*," *Monumenta Serica* 23 (1964): 1–87, particularly 43, 48, 54.
36. Erik Zürcher, "Renaissance Rhetoric in Late Ming China: Alfonso Vagnoni's Introduction to His *Science of Comparison*," in *Western Humanistic Culture Presented to China by Jesuit Missionaries (XVII–XVIII Centuries): Proceedings of the Conference Held in Rome, October 25–27, 1993*, ed. Federico Masini, 331–60 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1996), see especially 332–34.
37. Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, 109–12. On Xu Guangqi's portrayal of Europe in particular, see Monika Übelhör, "Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562–1633) und seine Einstellung zum Christentum: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der späten Ming-Zeit (Teil 1)," *Oriens Extremus* 15, no. 2 (1968): 191–257; Monika Übelhör, "Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562–1633) und seine Einstellung zum Christentum: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der späten Ming-Zeit (Teil 2)," *Oriens Extremus* 16, no. 1 (1969): 41–74, particularly 66; Min-sun Chen, "Hsü Kuang-Ch'i and His Image of the West," in Pullapilly and Van Kley, *Asia and the West*, 26–44, see especially 38. On Yang Tingyun in this context, see Yu-yin Cheng, "Changing Cosmology, Changing Perspectives on History and Politics: Christianity and Yang Tingyun's (1562–1627) Reflections on China," *Journal of World History* 24, no. 3 (2013): 499–537.
38. Zhu, *Responses*, 50b–51b.
39. *Book of Rites (Liji, Liyun*, chapter 1).
40. For more, see chapter 3 of the present volume.
41. Each of the seven sections of 50b–51b ends with the sentence pattern "The . . . in our China are not as good."
42. Zhu, *Responses*, 51b. Erik Zürcher, "Confucian and Christian Religiosity in Late Ming China," *Catholic Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (1997): 647, describes Zhu's

- portrayal of the West's superiority over China as "maybe unique" within Christian literature in seventeenth-century China.
43. Steven J. Harris, "Mapping Jesuit Science: The Role of Travel in the Geography of Knowledge," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, 212-40 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).
 44. Markus Friedrich, "Organisations- und Kommunikationsstrukturen der Gesellschaft Jesu: Ein Überblick," in *Etappen der Globalisierung in christentumsgegeschichtlicher Perspektive: Phases of Globalization in the History of Christianity*, ed. Klaus Koschorke, 83-104 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012); Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 193-215.
 45. Harris, "Mapping Jesuit Science," 217-18.
 46. Rivka Feldhay, "The Cultural Field of Jesuit Science," in O'Malley, Bailey, Harris, and Kennedy, *The Jesuits*, 107-30.
 47. Dominic Sachsenmaier, "The Cultural Transmission from China to Europe," in *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume 1: 635-1800*, ed. Nicolas Standaert, 879-905 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).
 48. Sven Trakulhun, *Asiatische Revolutionen: Europa und der Aufstieg und Fall asiatischer Imperien (1600-1830)* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2017), 9-123.
 49. Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1990* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 127-34.
 50. Zhu, *Summary*, 63a-63b; Zhu, *Treatise*, 5b-6a. Yang Tingyun also defended the Jesuits against attacks of this kind. See Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: His Life and Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 158-61.
 51. Zhu, *Responses*, 53a.
 52. On rumors that the Jesuits created gold by alchemy to bribe the Chinese, see Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, 122-24; Paul Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism* (Crow's Nest, Austral.: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 21. Ricci also mentions the belief that he himself was a master of this art; see Pietro Tacchi Venturi, ed., *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci, S. I.* (Macerata, It.: Premiato stab. tip. F. Giorgetti, 1913), 2:209. Like its European counterpart, Daoist alchemy (*huangbai zhi shu*) also attempted to produce silver and gold.
 53. Zhu, *Responses*, 54b.
 54. Zhu, *Responses*, 55a. Zürcher, "Jesuit Mission in Fujian," 447, remarks that the Jesuits never pointed out the differences between Nestorianism and Catholicism. On the stele of Xian in general, see, for instance, Ralph R. Covell, *Confucius, the Buddha, and Christ: A History of the Gospel in Chinese* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986), 20.
 55. Adrian Dudink, "Christianity in Late Ming China: Five Studies" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 1995), 286.

56. Indeed, many Jesuits began their Chinese texts by pointing out how far they had traveled. See Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 104.
57. Many Christian texts of the time, including Aleni's *Sanshan lunxueji* and *Zhi-fang waji*, stress the fact that the Jesuits exposed themselves to long, perilous journeys purely for the sake of spreading their religion. See Bernard Hung-Kay Luk, "Thus the Twain Did Meet? The Two Worlds of Giulio Aleni" (PhD. diss., Indiana University, 1977), 24–25.
58. Zhu, *Responses*, 53a–53b.
59. Zhu, *Responses*, 54a.
60. For example, *Mencius* 6a, X, 1: "If [I] cannot have both at once, I shall renounce life and take righteousness." Similar quotations can be found in *Lunyu* IV, V, 3, and *Lunyu* XV, 8.
61. For a philosophical interpretation of these thoughts, see Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1978).
62. For an overview of Confucian schools during the late Ming period, see Willard J. Peterson, "Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, 708–88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572–1644* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
63. Willard J. Peterson, "Learning from Heaven: The Introduction of Christianity and Other Western Ideas into Late Ming China," in Twitchett and Mote, *Cambridge History of China*, 789–839, see particularly 789; D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 8–9.
64. A complete inventory of the Nanjing Jesuit residence drawn up in connection with the 1616–1617 trial points to this and further evidence of the missionaries' imitation of the lifestyle of Chinese scholars. See Adrian Dudink, "The Inventory of the Jesuit House at Nanjing Made Up during the Persecution of 1616–1617," in Masini, *Western Humanistic Culture*, 119–57.
65. Generally on the usage of the term *ru*, see the older, yet still relevant, account by Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 1: The Period of the Philosophers (From the Beginnings to circa 100 B.C.)*, trans. Dirk Bodde (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 48.
66. For more on the Confucian, or neo-Confucian, notion of passing down the Way, see chapter 3 in the present volume, the section "Contested Landscapes: Confucian Teachings in Late Ming China."
67. Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).
68. For a discussion of this topic with a reference to the Chinese term *shi* (learned individual), see Peterson, "Learning from Heaven," 789–839.

69. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "'Western Gods Meet in the East': Shapes and Contexts of the Muslim-Jesuit Dialogue in Early Modern China," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, no. 2-3 (2012): 517-46, particularly 532.
70. There is evidence that missionaries did indeed make an impression on renowned individual Chinese thinkers, and that they did so by presenting themselves as respectable scholars. One example of this is the admiration that the philosopher Li Zhi (d. 1602), who was not a convert, expressed for Matteo Ricci. He regarded Ricci as a morally and intellectually distinguished scholar. See Li Zhi, *Xu Fenshu* [Sequel to *Fenshu*] (1918; repr., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 35. However, Li also remarks that he doesn't know exactly why the missionaries have come. See Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, 18-19.
71. Zhu, *Treatise*, 5b.
72. *Analects* 12,19. For an annotated translation, see Simon Leys, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Norton, 1997), 59.
73. Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Neo-Confucian Cultivation and the Seventeenth-Century 'Enlightenment,'" in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary, 141-216 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), see especially 182. Ricci uses the term *wu* in the sense of "reason" — see the introduction to Ricci, *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, 155.
74. Zhu, *Treatise*, 3b-4a.
75. Zhu, *Responses*, 52a.
76. The term *shengren* was more widely used in late Ming society than *shengxian*. In the Confucian tradition, the term *xian* has nothing to do with the Daoist immortals (although it is also used in this context) but refers to people who act in accordance with their moral values (see under *xian* and *shengren* in *Zhongwen da cidian*, 40 vols. [Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 1962-1968]).
77. Zürcher, "Confucian and Christian Religiosity," 618, emphasizes the significance of Buddhist influences.
78. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 66-69, 100.
79. Rodney Leon Taylor, *The Cultivation of Sagehood as a Religious Goal in Neo-Confucianism: A Study of Selected Writings of Kao P'an-lung (1562-1626)* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 21.
80. On Wang Yangming, see Tu Wei-ming, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth (1472-1509)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). On the Taizhou school, see Edward T. Ch'ien, "Chiao Hung and the Revolt against Ch'eng-Chu Orthodoxy: The Left Wing Wang Yang-ming School as a Source of the Han Learning in the Early Ch'ing," in de Bary, *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, 271-301, see particularly 297.
81. Pauline C. Lee, *Li Zhi, Confucianism, and the Virtue of Desire* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012).
82. Zhu, *Summary*, 5a-5b.

83. Aleni was even occasionally referred to as the Confucius from the West (*xilai kongzi*). See Tiziana Lippiello and Roman Malek, eds., “Scholar from the West”: Giulio Aleni S. J. (1582–1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China (Brescia, It.: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana; Sankt Augustin, Ger.: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1997); Markus Friedrich, *Die Jesuiten: Aufstieg, Niedergang, Neubeginn* (Frankfurt: Piper, 2016), 499.
84. Ricci, *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, 447–49.
85. D. E. Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994), 112, 165, suspects that Zhang Xingyao did not describe individual Jesuit missionaries since he had only little personal contact with them. Zhang was active two generations after Zhu Zongyuan’s death, a time when the Jesuit presence in China outside Beijing had grown thin.
86. Han Lin and Zhang Geng, *Shengjiao xinzheng* [Evidence of the Christian faith] (Jiangzhou, 1647).
87. In the early Qing period, Muslim astronomers were being replaced with Jesuits; see Kiyosi Yabuuti, “Islamic Astronomy in China during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties,” trans. Benno van Dalen, *Historia Scientiarum* 7, no. 1 (1997): 11–43. See also Nicola Di Cosmo, “Did Guns Matter? Firearms and the Qing Formation,” in *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, ed. Lynn A. Struve, 121–66 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), see particularly 145. On the minor role of foreign ties in many aspects of Chinese Islam, see Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).
88. Isabel Pina, “Chinese and Mestizo Jesuits from the China Mission (1589–1689),” in *Europe–China: Intercultural Encounters (16th–18th Centuries)*, ed. Luís Filipe Barreto, 117–37 (Lisbon: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2012). See also chapter 2 of the present volume for more.
89. Another Chinese Christian, the Jesuit Zheng Weixin (1633–1673), was ordained as a priest in Europe in 1664 and returned to China in 1668. Regarding Zheng and Luo Wenzao, see Nicolas Standaert, “Chinese Christians Going Abroad,” in Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity*, 1:449–55.
90. Nicolas Standaert, “Missionaries,” in Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity*, 1:286–354.
91. Hsia, *World of Catholic Renewal*, 192–97.
92. Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 129–30.
93. Wolfgang Reinhard, *Die Unterwerfung der Welt: Globalgeschichte der europäischen Expansion, 1415–2015* (Munich: Beck, 2016), 135.
94. Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 236.
95. Michael Keevak, *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011).
96. Manfred Berg and Simon Wendt, eds., *Racism in the Modern World: Historical Perspectives on Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (New York: Berghahn Books,

- 2011). On China, see Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992).
97. Ruth Hill, "Between Black and White: A Critical Race Theory Approach to Caste Poetry in the Spanish New World," *Comparative Literature* 59, no. 4 (2007): 269–93.
 98. Thomas Cohen, "Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Society of Jesus," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester, 199–214 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), see especially 199–203.
 99. Cohen, "Racial and Ethnic Minorities," 203–6.
 100. Hsia, *World of Catholic Renewal*, 207–8.
 101. Wolfgang Reinhard, *A Short History of Colonialism* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2011), 29. There are many other examples for similar statements—for instance, Jesuit reports of "savages" in New France; see Dominique Delandres, "*Exemplo aequo ut verbo*: The French Jesuits' Missionary World," in O'Malley, Bailey, Harris, and Kennedy, *The Jesuits*, 258–73, see particularly 264.
 102. Andrew C. Ross, "Alessandro Valignano: The Jesuits and Culture in the East," in O'Malley, Bailey, Harris, and Kennedy, *The Jesuits*, 336–51, see especially 347–49.
 103. Nicolas Standaert and John Witek, "Chinese Clergy," in Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity*, 1:462–70.

EPILOGUE

1. For a comparative account, see On-cho Ng, "The Epochal Concept of 'Early Modernity' and the Intellectual History of Late Imperial China," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 1 (2003): 37–61.
2. John R. McNeill and William McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (New York: Norton, 2003), 183.
3. In an influential essay, Erik Zürcher analyzes the Chinese cultural imperative in the Jesuit China mission: "Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative," in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, ed. D. E. Mungello, 31–64 (Nettetal, Ger.: Steyler, 1994). On the usage of this concept, see Nicolas Standaert, *The Interweaving of Rituals: Funerals in the Cultural Exchange between China and Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 136.
4. On the connections between the Catholic missions and the early modern state, see R. Po-chia Hsia, "Mission Frontiers: A Reflection on Catholic Missions in the Early Modern World," in *The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism*, ed. Alison Forrestal and Seán Alexander

- Smith, 180–93 (Leiden: Brill, 2016). On related topics, see Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 262–66.
5. On the seventeenth-century usages of the concept of *religio* (which were not identical with today's connotations of "religion"), see Nadine Amsler, "'Sie meinen, die drei Sekten seien eins': Matteo Riccis Aneignung des sanjiao-Konzepts und ihre Bedeutung für europäische Beschreibungen chinesischer Religion im 17. Jahrhundert," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 105 (2011): 77–93. Seventeenth-century Chinese had no equivalents of this dichotomy—after all, Chinese terms for "religion" and "philosophy" like *zongjiao* and *zhexue* became influential only in the late nineteenth century.
6. Certainly, in today's scholarship definitions of "religion" and "religiosity" have become decidedly wider and more multifaceted. See Benson Saler, *Understanding Religion: Selected Essays* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009); Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013). For China, see Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
7. On the term "civilization" and its various connotations in the singular and plural, see, for example, Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). Regarding the wider transformations of the Chinese language around the turn of the twentieth century, when it—among other changes—incorporated new terms for "civilization," see Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995).
8. R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 181–82.
9. Timothy Brook, "Europaeology? On the Difficulty of Assembling a Knowledge of Europe in China," in *Christianity and Cultures: Japan and China in Comparison, 1543–1644*, ed. M. Antoni J. Üçerler, 261–85 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2010), 261–85.
10. A comprehensive account of the early modern European book sphere is provided in Timothy Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe, 1648–1815* (New York: Viking, 2007), 475–79.
11. Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
12. Charles Wheeler, "Buddhism in the Re-ordering of an Early Modern World. Chinese Missions to Cochinchina in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 3 (2007): 303–24.

13. Joseph F. Fletcher, "Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500–1800," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (1985): 37–57.
14. Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
15. Islam, Christianity, and Theravada Buddhism belong to this category. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia: A Political and Economic History*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 31.
16. In some cases, new religious forms emerged as responses to cultural tensions and constraints. For example, during the early 1500s Sikhism developed in the Punjab at least partly as a way of bridging differences between Islam, the religion of the Mughals, and local Hinduism. For more, see Khushwant Singh, *The Illustrated History of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
17. R. Michael Feener, "South-East Asian Localisations of Islam and Participation within a Global *Umma*, c. 1500–1800," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 3: The Eastern Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid, 470–503 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Charles Parker, *Global Interactions in the Early Modern World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 182–89, 198–201.
18. Anthony H. Johns, "Friends in Grace: Ibrahim al-Kurani and Abd al-Ra'uf al Singkeli," in *Spectrum: Essays Presented to Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. S. Udin, 469–85 (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 1978).
19. Different religious traditions had of course long encountered one another and, in many cases, even existed side by side in places ranging from Sicily to Kaifeng. Yet by and large religious organizations had been founded on mono-cultural foundations and had clustered around single world regions. See Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, "Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities—A Comparative View," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 1–18.
20. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735–62.
21. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "On World Historians in the Sixteenth Century," *Representations* 91 (2005): 26–57; Dominic Sachsenmaier, "The Cultural Transmission from China to Europe," in *Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume 1: 635–1800*, ed. Nicolas Standaert, 879–905 (Leiden: Brill, 2000). See also the still relevant article by Edwin J. Van Kley, "Europe's 'Discovery' of China and the Writing of World History," *American Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (1971): 358–85.
22. The rules of economic and other transactions as well as cultures of political exchange were increasingly converging around standard patterns. See Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 292–93.
23. For more, see McNeill and McNeill, *The Human Web*, 162, 182–83.
24. John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire, 1400–2000* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 84–85.

25. Frank Broeze, *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th–20th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989).
26. Parker, *Global Interactions*, 70–81.
27. The trading (and other) connections of single diasporic communities have become the subject of a growing research literature. See, for example, Ho, *The Graves of Tarim*; Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).
28. Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “‘Like the Hebrews in Spain’: The Jesuit Encounter with Muslims in China and the Problem of Cultural Change,” *Al-Qantara* 36, no. 2 (2015): 503–29, focuses on Matteo Ricci’s perception of Islam in China, arguing that the missionary’s views of that religion were constrained by images of Islam in contemporary Europe.
29. Michael N. Pearson, “Creating a Littoral Community: Muslim Reformers in the Early Modern Indian Ocean World,” in *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World*, ed. Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley, 155–65 (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), see particularly 158.
30. On the relatively few encounters between Jesuits and Muslims in China, see Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “‘Western Gods Meet in the East’: Shapes and Contexts of the Muslim-Jesuit Dialogue in Early Modern China,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, no. 2–3 (2012): 517–46.
31. Wheeler, “Buddhism in the Re-ordering,” 303–24; Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
32. For instance, the Ottoman Empire tolerated religious diversity even though over time it stepped up the pressure for an Islamicization of its population through instruments such as tax policies that differentiated between different groups of believers. For a global yet locally sensitive history of Islam, see Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
33. Reinhard, *Short History of Colonialism*, 43; D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 16.
34. Hsia, *World of Catholic Renewal*, 187–216.