

ANCESTORS,
VIRGINS,
& FRIARS
*Christianity as a
Local Religion in
Late Imperial China*

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& FRIARS

*Christianity as a
Local Religion in
Late Imperial China*

Eugenio Menegon

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To my fathers:

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E.M.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

For complete bibliographic data on the works cited below, see the Bibliography, pp. 385–425.

- AMEP Archives du Séminaire des Missions Étrangères de Paris
(Archives of the Seminary of the Society of Foreign
Missions, Paris)
- APF Archivio Storico della Congregazione per
l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o *de Propaganda Fide*
- APSR Archivo de la Provincia del Santo Rosario (Archives of
the Dominican Province of the Holy Rosary, Manila and
Avila)
- ARSI Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Roman Archives of
the Society of Jesus)
- CE Herbermann et al., eds., 1913–22, *The Catholic
Encyclopedia*.
- CHOC *The Cambridge History of China*, 1978–2009.
- CCT ARSI Standaert and Dudink, eds., 2002, *Yesuhui Luoma dang' an-
guan Ming-Qing Tianzhujiao wenxian—Chinese Christian
Texts from the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus*.

DMB	Goodrich and Fang, eds., 1976, <i>Dictionary of Ming Biography</i> .
ECCP	Hummel, ed., 1943–44, <i>Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period</i> .
FAXZ	<i>Fuan xianzhi</i> ([Guangxu] Gazetteer of Fuan county), 1986.
GH	González, 1955–67, <i>Historia de las misiones dominicanas de China</i> , 5 vols.
GM	González, 1952–58, <i>Misiones dominicanas de China</i> (1700–1750), 2 vols.
HCC	Standaert, ed., 2001, <i>Handbook of Christianity in China</i> , vol. 1, 635–1800.
MEP	Missions Étrangères de Paris (Society of Foreign Missions, Paris)
OP	Ordo Praedicatorum (Order of Preachers = Dominicans)
OFM	Ordo Fratrum Minorum (Order of the Friars Minor = Franciscans)
PXJ	Xu Changzhi, 1986, <i>Shengchao poxie ji</i> (1640).
QTS	<i>Qing zhong qianqi Xiyang Tianzhujiào zai Hua huodong dang'an shiliao</i> (Historical materials on Catholic activities in China in the early Qing), 2003.
RH	Riccio, 1667, “Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de la China.”
SF	<i>Sinica Franciscana</i> , 1933–97, 11 vols.
SJ	Societas Jesu (Society of Jesus = Jesuits)
SOCG	<i>Scrittura Originale riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali</i> (Original documents referred to in the general meetings), in APF.
YQTW	Wu Min and Han Qi, eds., 2008, <i>Ouzhou suocang Yongzheng Qianlong chao Tianzhujiào wenxian huibian</i> (A collection of Yongzheng- and Qianlong-era [Chinese-language] documents on Catholicism preserved in Europe).

- YZH *Yongzheng chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* (A compilation of Chinese-language vermilion-rescripted memorials from the Yongzheng era). 1989.
- YZM *Yongzheng chao Manwen zhupi zouzhe quan yi* 雍正朝滿文硃批奏摺全譯 (A complete translation of the Manchu-language vermilion-rescripted memorials from the Yongzheng era). 1998.

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INTRODUCTION

“Truly Unfathomable”?

Throughout 1746, the eleventh year of the Qianlong reign of the Qing dynasty, baffled provincial officials in the southern province of Fujian reported to Beijing the strange and, in their words, “truly unfathomable” activities of a handful of Western missionaries and their numerous Chinese followers. Officials had discovered that in Fuan 福安 county adherents of the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven, or Tianzhujiao 天主教, as “Catholicism” is still translated into Chinese, had for decades been secretly sheltering Spanish priests in their homes. In 1724 the Yongzheng emperor had forbidden Christian activities, and yet, in Fuan, some of the culprits were degree-holders, young unmarried women from respectable families, and even low-ranking employees in local government offices. The authorities promptly sent troops, who raided the county and arrested five foreigners and a score of their Chinese followers. To add to the shock, the provincial surveillance commissioner reported to his superiors that when the foreigners and the most prominent native leaders of the Christian community were being transferred in chains for trial in the provincial capital of Fuzhou, over a thousand men and women gathered at the town gates, “grabbing the carts [of the prisoners] and crying aloud” in support of the detainees. To the officials’ horror, one of the captives, an elderly local degree-holder, shouted: “We are suffering for the Lord of Heaven, and even if we die we will not regret it!” This appalling behavior confirmed an earlier report offered by the local prefect: “[In this place] the bad custom of female virginity

thrives. . . . [These Christians] do not recognize the ancestors, do not believe in the gods, and consider their parents as mere vessels for birth, and the foreigners as their 'great fathers.' . . . Alas, the onslaught against the [Five] Relationships and the damage to civilization are unbearable!" Missionary sources confirm that local Christians had indeed burned effigies of gods, abandoned ancestral rituals, and even destroyed their ancestral tablets, a capital crime in the Qing legal code. Moreover, most of the arrested women, in spite of their elite background, had upset the order of orthodox social relations. Rather than marry, they had chosen to remain virgins in order to better serve the Lord of Heaven.¹

These rebellious acts stemmed in part from the religious teachings the converts had absorbed from their Spanish priests. These priests were Dominican friars of the Province of the Most Holy Rosary, headquartered in the Philippines, who had first reached Fuan in the 1630s. The Dominicans' adamant opposition to ancestral rituals among Christians and their admission of women into their lay branch, the Third Order, challenged two crucial pillars of the patriarchal kinship system: veneration of ancestors and the subordinate social status of women.

The 1746 Fuan incident could have been an eruption from a religious group on its way to annihilation. But the history of Tianzhujiao in Fujian puts this incident in a rather different light. Over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Catholic communities first established in the region of Fuan in the 1630s survived this and several other anti-Christian campaigns conducted by the imperial state. More recently, they have weathered the frequent political campaigns of the Maoist era and are now a constituent of regional religious life. As of 1990, the year of the last official population survey, 45,386 Catholics in Fuan township, or 8.56 percent of the total population of 530,069, lived in eighteen locales within the township and represented around 20 percent of all Catholics in Fujian province. According to statistics of the

1. Quotations on the arrest of Christians and missionaries are from a memorial by the Fujian Provincial Surveillance Commissioner Gioro Yarhašan (Jue-luo Yar-er-ha-shan 覺羅雅爾哈善), QL 11/8/2 (Sept. 16, 1746), in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 68, 104; for other details on this episode, compare the memorial by Governor Zhou Xuejian 周學健, QL 11/5/28 (July 16, 1746), in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 58, 88. The report of Prefect Dong Qizuo 董啓祚 is preserved in AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 893–94 (YQTW, doc. 27, 60–62). The Confucian Five Relationships describe the hierarchies and duties between sovereign and official, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and among friends.

Roman Catholic Church, in the diocese of Mindong 閩東 (northeastern Fujian), whose historical seat is Fuan, there are today over 80,000 Catholics. Many of these Christians, especially in the territory of Fuan, are descendants of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century converts. Catholicism has become a permanent fixture of the local cultural and religious landscape.²

How could a religious community that so openly defied the central institutions of Chinese patriarchal society—ancestral rituals and marriage—and promoted values challenging prevailing norms and imperial laws and policies survive for so long in the face of state opposition? How is it possible that local elites, government personnel, and women from elite families, not the marginal individuals or social discontents as some past scholarly wisdom would have us believe, made up the rank and file of this heterodox Christian community? Yet, this is what we find in the 1746 episode. By then, Catholicism, a foreign and global religion brought to China by European missionaries, had become a local religion, finding a niche within a lively world of religious groups, such as the various lay devotional sects partly inspired by Buddhism ubiquitous in late imperial times, equally suspect in the eyes of government censors and gentry critics. In the past few decades, scholars of Chinese society and religions, in particular those working on Daoism, Buddhism, lay devotional groups, and village religion have been dismantling the myth of a China fully under the spell of Confucian values enforced by state and local elites. In fact, state and elite attempts at creating an orthodox "cultural integration" and "cultural standardization" of practices and beliefs run parallel to the practices and beliefs of diverse local religious expressions, frequently heterodox and heteroprax in state and elite opinions. In the spirit of this new scholarship, this book charts the local transformation of Christianity and illustrates its importance to late imperial history.³

2. Official statistics on Fuan township (an administrative unit recently introduced and replacing the old county) from *Fuan shizhi*, 1036–37. Contemporary church statistics include Catholics in both the official, government-sponsored open church (ca. 10,000 members) and the "underground" church faithful to the Vatican (ca. 70,000 members); see "China Catholic Directory" 2006, 510, 525–31.

3. For recent critiques of the past emphasis on the Confucian model of Chinese society, see, e.g., Faure 2007 and Lagerwey 2007. These authors show how the two parallel worlds of "territorial China," dominated by the gods, and "lineage China," dominated by the ancestors, co-existed side by side, and how the emphasis in the

To talk of Christianity as a local religion in China, however, may sound contentious to some. Since the rise of Chinese nationalism in the 1910s and 1920s, much of the literature on Christian missions in China has either praised Christianity as an agent of modernization or damned it as a form of cultural and religious imperialism. In both cases, Christianity's foreignness and the alienation it sometimes brought Chinese Christians, who were shunned by their compatriots as traitors, have long been at the center of the debate. Protected by diplomatic treaties with Western powers, Christian missions, both Catholic and Protestant, expanded in China after 1860 and provoked conflict in rural and urban areas. The interference of foreign missionaries in local politics and social life combined with pre-existing tensions along kinship or ethnic lines to produce hundreds of "missionary cases." Local officials had to adjudicate disputes over property and community duties (taxes and labor) between Christians and non-Christians and to endure strong pressure from the central government and the foreign diplomatic corps to protect Chinese Christians and foreign priests and pastors. Often that meant exempting converts and their churches from legal and customary obligations. Many violent outbursts resulted in the deaths of missionaries and converts, and a wave of anti-Christian sentiment pervaded all levels of society. Missions, however, contributed to the advancement of the Chinese educational and medical systems and to the scientific and technological development of the country. This view of Christianity as a foreign, modern, and aggressive faith is based on the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century experience, and that experience has triggered ambiguous feelings of admiration of and loathing toward missionaries and Chinese Christians, in China and elsewhere.⁴

Modern experiences have obscured perceptions of Catholic communities in the late Ming and mid-Qing periods *before* the Opium Wars,

historical record on the lineage dimension has obfuscated the territorial dimension: "Economic changes, administrative necessities, and the neo-Confucian agenda for social engineering converged to produce what China's intellectuals and, in their wake, we in the West, thanks first to the Jesuits and last to anthropologists like [Maurice] Freedman, came to think of as China. That China . . . came into existence in the sixteenth and disappeared in the nineteenth century. If we really want to talk about 'China,' then, we will have to do better than that" (Lagerwey 2007, 473). For a recent appraisal of this shift in scholarship, see, e.g., Sutton 2007.

4. For a summary of scholarly approaches to the history of Christianity in late Qing China, covering up to 1978, see Paul Cohen's chapter "Christian Missions and Their Impact to 1900" in *CHOC*, 10.1, 543–90.

and a completely different historical context has too often been misunderstood. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Chinese government exerted full political, economic, and military dominance over Catholic missionaries and the European powers impinging on the fringes of the empire. When Catholic priests of the Society of Jesus reached the shores of southern China in the 1550s under Portuguese protection, they opened the door for the first sustained cultural and religious exchange between Europe and the Chinese empire. But they did so in a manner that was specifically developed for the Asian missions. In Japan, China, and, to a lesser degree, India, the Jesuits pioneered a method of evangelization that made use of European "secular" learning, while adapting themselves to native cultures and ideologies. The Jesuits' introduction of some European scientific knowledge to the imperial court had a limited impact on late imperial technology and science, and virtually none on education. No "modernization" resulted from this contact. In spite of this, much of past scholarship has projected over that earlier Catholic experience a judgment about missionaries as either heralds of Western modernity or instruments of cultural and religious imperialism more applicable to the nineteenth or twentieth century.⁵

The past two decades of scholarship, however, have called into question existing interpretations of the role of Christianity in China before and after the Opium Wars. Scholars have concentrated on Chinese Christians and their interactions with missionaries and the rest of the populace in an attempt to probe the lived experience of local actors and understand their position within native society. New research on Catholic missions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and on Protestantism and Catholicism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has reconstructed the experience of Chinese Christians in state-building, intellectual history, civil society, and religious activities and showed that in many locales Christians were part of broader native intellectual circles and kinship networks and thus fully integrated into the dynamics of Chinese social life.⁶

5. For a recent treatment of the late imperial reception and use of Catholic and Protestant scientific and technological knowledge and its evangelistic inflections, see Elman 2005.

6. On the shift to the study of Chinese Christians' agency and local communities in late imperial times, see Menegon 1998a and 2005b, with references to further historiography on the topic. For an overview of new approaches in both the

An interpretation relatively unconcerned with imperialism and modernization, what is sometimes called the scholarly discourse of "Confucian Christianity," frames and further complicates the picture of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic experience. The central assumption of this framework, spearheaded by European scholars such as Erik Zürcher, Nicolas Standaert, and Adrian Dudink, is that missionaries, in particular the Jesuits, had to accommodate the cultural imperatives of "Confucian orthodoxy" in order to transmit Christian doctrine, rituals, and values to the Chinese. Similarly, the only way for Christians to survive in China was to continue respecting the social norms and the rituals (*lijiao* 禮教) of the imperial institutions and the kinship system, the ultimate embodiments of Confucian orthodoxy. In this view, religious plurality could exist only as long as the basic institutions and values of the Confucian order were respected. This orthodox socio-ethical system of belief encompassed both elite and popular milieus and was based on the Three Bonds (the subordination of subject to monarch, child to parents, and wife to husband), a triad that supported state institutions and a patriarchal organization of kinship. Ancestral rituals were the central institution of orthodox socio-ethics in this kinship system, and one of the universal elements in the life of most Chinese. Even popular cults were co-opted in an effort to buttress the values of this official orthodoxy.⁷

The corollary to this scholarly vision, strongly influenced by elite Chinese interpretations of late imperial culture and society, is that Christianity could take root in China only by becoming "Confucianized." Indeed, the strategy of early Jesuit missionaries and their converts in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries echoes this interpreta-

Catholic and the Protestant historiographical traditions, see the edited volume Bays 1996. The best and most up-to-date introduction to sources, new methodologies, and scholarship on Christianity in China before 1800 is HCC. Recent examples of the new scholarly trend focusing on native agency among Protestants are Dunch 2001 (Fujian) and Joseph Lee 2003 (Guangdong); for nineteenth-century Catholicism (Jiangxi), see Sweeten 1996 and 2001. See also Dunch 2002 for a historiographical critique of the indiscriminate use of the concept of "cultural imperialism" as applied to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Christian missions.

7. Kwang-ching Liu 1990, *passim*. These ideas, and the meaning of heterodoxy, were most systematically explored in C. K. Yang's classic *Religion in Chinese Society*; see Yang 1961, 192–217; cf. also Dudink in HCC, 504–5 for a summary of scholarly discussions of Confucian orthodoxy and its relationship to Christianity as heterodoxy.

tion. These missionaries and elite Christians embraced the main tenets of the moral system of Confucianism and supported the political order of China. The Jesuits could therefore proclaim the orthodoxy of Christianity while still distinguishing themselves from other religious traditions considered heterodox by most of the educated class. Behind this strategy lurked the hope that Christianity would eventually change those elements of the Confucian worldview deemed incompatible with Christian theology and moral practice. The Jesuits thus accepted ancestral rituals as civil and not religious ceremonies. What Christianity became in the late Ming, however, did not necessarily conform to the master plan of the missionaries. Further research has revealed that Chinese Christians transformed the teachings and practices they received from Europeans into an indigenous religious movement, with a special theological understanding informed by neo-Confucian thought.⁸

By concentrating on "Confucian Christianity" and its textual tradition, most scholars have limited their investigations to doctrinal debates among the higher echelons of literati converts and privileged the study of literati networks that extended over great distances and among elites to the neglect of local communities and commoners. Rituals and social relations in local contexts have now started to attract scholarly attention. It is becoming increasingly clear that the historical experience of Christian communities in different parts of the empire varied according to localized norms and social practices. In places like Fuan, "Confucian Christianity" and the textual world of prominent literati converts did not occupy the place of honor. Daily rituals and personal devotions did. And it is in this environment that, I argue, Christianity was fully transformed into a local Chinese religion.⁹

By examining the religion practiced among Christian commoners and local gentry in rural Fujian, my study aims to show that Christians did not necessarily practice rituals and follow social norms fully in

8. See Zürcher 1994, 33, and 1997a; and Standaert 1988, 223; cf. Mungello 1994.

9. Recent scholarship adopting the localization paradigm to study Catholic communities in late imperial times includes, e.g., Entenmann 1996a, on Sichuan; Laamann 2006, on north China; Lozada 2001, on Guangdong; Kang 2006, on Hubei; Xiaojuan Huang 2006, on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Beijing and Jiangnan; Brockey 2007, on Ming to mid-Qing Jiangnan; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a and 2009, on Ming-Qing northeastern Fujian. Recent studies of Catholic ritual practices in the seventeenth century are Standaert and Dudink 2006; and Standaert 2008.

harmony with the dominant socio-religious context. Fuan's experience, in particular, shows that one could be an accepted member of local society *and* a Christian without subscribing to the Confucianized Christianity of Jesuit communities. Chinese Christians, and especially Fuan Christians, moreover were hardly passive agents "molded" by attempts to replicate a European evangelization model on Chinese soil and create "outposts of baroque Catholicism in the vastness of China," as Liam Brockey has recently proposed. For converts, to be local and Christian in China meant creating a new religious identity, both Chinese *and* Catholic, local and yet universalistic in aspiration. This was not an easy course. The process of localization was fraught with conflict and required continuous negotiations with local society and responses to state intervention. The story of the Fuan communities starkly illuminates the confrontations and adaptations of the new local religion, as Fuan Christians challenged society over some of the central issues of social organization, including ancestral rituals, gender norms, and local religious cults. By the early eighteenth century, Fuan's Christians had succeeded in creating a niche for their values and practices in the local arena.¹⁰

At this point, however, the Qing state's energetic attempt to impose on local societies everywhere in the empire its civilizing agenda of "moral transformation" (*jiaohua* 教化; also translated as "transformation of customs through education") disrupted the life of Christian commu-

10. The expression "outposts of baroque Catholicism in the vastness of China" appears on the dust jacket of Liam Brockey's book. The introduction uses a similar phrase: "The pastoral efforts of the China Jesuits were . . . an effort in emulation [of European prototypes]. In that sense the scattered communities of Chinese Christians were vivid patches of baroque piety set in a vast and largely indifferent land" (Brockey 2007, 7). Brockey's analysis of the inner workings of the Society of Jesus in the Portuguese Assistancy and of Jesuit religious strategies in China is a great advancement in our knowledge of missionary organization in East Asia. His work also shows the importance of Jesuit lay organizations in Jiangnan and elsewhere. The focus, however, remains mostly on the missionaries, their internal structure, their educational background, and their initiatives modeled after European prototypes, and only to a limited extent on the Chinese Catholics. By covering the history of the Jesuit mission only up to 1724, moreover, Brockey's otherwise excellent book gives the impression that the Catholic church's organization and communitarian life completely collapsed after the Kangxi period, a perception that, in light of my own research, needs to be seriously reconsidered. It is precisely in the post-1724 period that localization of Christianity accelerated.

nities. As Janet Theiss puts it, this "old staple of Confucian statecraft discourse . . . acquired a distinctly paternalistic and bureaucratic cast in the eighteenth century as emperors and officials basking in the peace, prosperity, and imperial might of the High Qing formulated new ambitions for the state's role in society." As part of these policies, but also in response to court politics involving his father, the Kangxi emperor, his brothers, and the court Jesuits, the Yongzheng emperor forbade Christian activities in the provinces, labeling them heterodox. Fuan was the first place where the new prohibition policy was implemented in 1724.¹¹

If Christians in Fuan never fit the model of the Confucianized Jesuit communities, after 1724 they clearly belonged to the world of outlawed heterodox groups. But rather than derailing localization, the outlaw status accelerated it, forcing priests and Christians to live in close quarters to hide from authorities. This fostered a sense of tighter religious identity and nurtured the formation of native clergy who could more easily conduct a local ministry. Over long stretches of time, interrupted by episodic outbursts of state intrusion and repression, Christians continued their religious activities, gathering for prayer and for the ministration of sacraments and carrying on the traditions of their fathers and mothers, generation after generation. Lineages, often viewed by scholars as the ultimate structures of local control, showed little concern for these activities, and in some cases embraced them. This phase in the life of Fuan Christian communities offers a fresh look at the relationship between state-backed orthodoxy and heterodoxy in late imperial times. The vantage point here is not so much that of the state, already considered by many scholars, but the local arena and the internal perspective of the Christian community. Christianity as heterodoxy inhabited the same conceptual space that the state assigned to other officially proscribed religious expressions, such as lay devotional groups inspired by Buddhist tenets. But Christianity also fit literally within a physical space of *local* religious toleration that existed below the surface of state-imposed order. As Daniel Overmyer tells us, lay devotional groups were "a lively and widespread alternative religious tradition that was always technically illegal but that nevertheless managed to flourish in many areas over long periods of time."¹² This was certainly true in Fujian. In

11. On High Qing "civilizing" policies, see Theiss 2004, 35.

12. Overmyer 1999, 8.

spite of state suppression, by the sixteenth century lay devotional groups had spread to the province from north and eastern China and remained quite ubiquitous until the late nineteenth century. The religious field in the province was also occupied by another heterodox religious tradition, the Three-in-One Teachings (Sanyijiao 三一教), initiated by Lin Zhao-en 林兆恩 (1517–98), a native of Putian 莆田 (Xinghua 興化 prefecture) in coastal Fujian. Lin's message, which combined Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist tenets and practices, garnered broad support in the late Ming. Eventually, during the Qing and Republican eras, it grew into a large movement extending locally and transregionally and even to Southeast Asia. Despite this popularity, the founder and his followers earned condemnations as heretics and inciters of popular unrest from members of the elite and government officials. Finally, even mainstream and state-certified religious traditions, including monastic Buddhism or the cult of the canonized goddess Linshui furen 臨水夫人 (Lady of the Water Margins) popular in northern Fujian, offered heterodox models of religious behavior, such as marriage refusal and celibacy for women, that Christianity could present as legitimate possibilities for prospective converts. The same religious toleration and plurality at the local level that allowed these groups to survive and these ideas to circulate also benefited Christianity.¹³

The special interest of the Fuan Christian case derives in part from the nature of the documentary sources, which are exceptional in the history of premodern Chinese heterodox religious movements. These movements usually left few records, except for normative scriptures and confessions extorted under duress in government prisons. The internal perspective, the self-representation, and the detailed social history of these movements must be pieced together through sources penned for the most part by hostile outsiders. The voices contributing to our understanding of the Christian story are, instead, more diverse and include the perspectives of both insiders and outsiders. The internal story of the Fuan communities can be reconstructed through writings by native Christians, religious tracts, missionary reports, and family genealogies. The outsiders' picture is offered in local gazetteers, elite writings, and Qing memorials on the suppression of the communities. The sources are in most cases the products of two "civilizing projects" hovering over

13. On lay devotional groups in Fujian, see Seiwert 1992, 54, and 2003, *passim*; on Lin Zhaoen in Fujian, see Dean 1998a.

Fuan Christians: on one hand, the missionary project intent on saving souls and channeling converts into the Christian moral mold and, on the other hand, the Qing normative agenda aimed at maintaining orthodox social practices. By reading between the lines of these sources, the lived experience of local Christians, the "inner life" of the Christian community, can be understood and situated in relation to the prescriptive frameworks of church and state. What these sources ultimately yield is the story of the transformation of a foreign religion into a local religion within a pluralistic religious landscape, particularly rich and diverse in Fujian, and usually beyond the purview of central authorities.¹⁴

Chapters 2 through 5 of this book chronologically chart the process of Christianity's transformation into a local religion. Chapter 2 highlights the crucial role of local literati in bringing Catholicism to Fuan in the 1630s within the broader context of maritime China and the Spanish presence in Asia. Until then, the missionaries who had entered the Chinese empire belonged exclusively to the Jesuit order, but, in 1600, thanks to a reversal of previous papal policy, other Catholic religious groups were allowed to join them. Dominican and Franciscan friars could count both on the support of the Spanish colonial government and on the network of contacts developed in Manila within the local community of immigrants from southern Fujian. The Dominicans, in particular, heralded a "spiritual conquest" of China, whose rhetoric derived from the Spanish imperial project. After the colonial government in Manila abandoned a plan to invade China militarily in the 1580s, the Dominicans masterminded the Spanish occupation of northern Taiwan in 1626–42 for their own strategic reasons, and the island became the springboard to the Chinese mainland for the missionaries. These aggressive postures of the Spaniards in Asia and the close collaboration of the friars in their imperial enterprise were well known to

14. The best guides to the sources of the Dominican China mission, scattered in archives all over Europe and the Philippines, are two multivolume works by José María Gonzáles, GH and GM. The four-volume collection QTS contains the Qing government memorials preserved in the First Historical Archives in Beijing relevant to the history of the Christian community of Fuan. Some remaining Qing memorials on the topic are kept at the Palace Museum in Taiwan. Fuan Christian materials in Chinese and some other Qing government materials are preserved in several archives and libraries in Europe and China. Most genealogical materials are still in the hands of local lineages. For a discussion of the typology and nature of sources, see the "Note on Sources" at the end of this volume.

Chinese officials and the population of the southern littoral but did not prevent evangelization from succeeding.

Chapters 3 through 5 narrate the story of Fuan's Christian communities from 1632, the year of the first Dominican's arrival, to the late 1830s, the eve of epochal changes in modern Chinese history and in the history of Christianity in China following the signing of the Sino-Western treaties imposing the legalization of the Christian presence in China. These chapters chronicle both the internal history of the Christian communities and the reactions of local elites, local authorities, and the central government to Christian activities. Local Christians, rather than the foreign missionaries, were the key actors in the gradual entrenchment of Catholicism in the local scene. This development is charted under four main rubrics characterizing subsequent phases in the story of the community before the Opium Wars: conflict, opportunity, toleration, and suppression and persistence. The initial period of social conflict between Christians and local elites is explored in Chapter 3. A split in the Christian community between pro-Jesuit and pro-Dominican converts and a violent backlash in local society followed in quick sequence after incidents involving the friars' iconoclasm against local gods and rejection of ancestral rituals. The conflict climaxed in a government-led anti-Christian provincial campaign in 1637–38, which radicalized a few committed converts and redirected the missionaries' evangelizing efforts from literati to commoners and women. These developments earned the community a hard-core nucleus of followers that gradually expanded Christian influence into the "inner chambers," where women lived. Local elites and lineages perceived this as yet another frontal attack against the patriarchal order and reacted accordingly by accusing missionaries of predatory sexual behavior and Christians of a lack of filiality. The local establishment thus revealed its deep anxieties over gender boundaries and lineage stability. The process of penetration of Christian values and practices in the life of Fuan had started to unfold.

Chapter 4 relates the unique circumstances of a brief golden age of opportunity for local Christians during the Ming-Qing transition. This historical juncture allowed the Christian community, under the leadership of some notable literati, to emerge as a local power-holder within the Southern Ming loyalist movement of resistance to the Manchu invaders. After this fleeting moment of glory and the defeat of the Ming, the Qing establishment led to an age of toleration for Christians but

also of stronger central government control during the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns. This injected an actor mostly ineffective in the late Ming, the state. Chapter 5 charts the intrusion of the Qing state into local society in Fuan through repression guided from the provincial capital and Beijing against the Catholic communities, by then fully embedded as a local religion and largely accepted by elites and populace alike. Rather than annihilation, however, suppression led to resistance, the creation of a native priesthood, and a sense of stronger religious identity connecting Fuan Christians even more directly with the global circuit of Catholicism as a world religion.

The picture of local toleration even during the period of suppression by the Qing state, however, should not mask the fact that some Christian beliefs and practices posed ideological challenges to local society. How do we account for the acceptance of these Christian heterodox positions in Fuan? Chapters 6 to 9 offer an in-depth examination of important territorial, social, and cultural-religious elements in the process of Christian entrenchment. They also discuss areas of conflict and negotiation over rituals and social norms. Chapter 6 analyzes the organizational and sociological dimensions of the Fuan Christian communities and argues that several pre-existing factors strongly influenced the growth of the Christian communities. These factors included the geographical layout of the land, the administrative and marketing systems of the region, and the territorial organization of lineages within a changing historical context. The other crucial factor in cementing the Christian presence after the first generation of conversions, especially in the core area of Fuan county, was the role of kinship relationships in the conversion process. By integrating themselves within the fabric of local society and especially by nesting themselves within kinship networks, Christians partially blended their values and practices with those dominating the religious and social life of late imperial Fujian. This was one of the main factors in their survival.

Social and kinship networks alone, however, would have not been sufficient to bind the Christian community of Fuan. Ritual life and religious piety made Christianity an attractive path for locals while fostering a communitarian ethos. Chapter 7 concentrates on the religious ingredients that shaped the internal life of the community: the priests, the community's lay institutions, and their common ritual activities. The rituals, devotions, and institutions of the Christian communities, administered by the priest and sustained by the laity, fulfilled local

religious longings. The Dominicans positioned themselves as experts in a vivacious and competitive religious market of “effective rituals,” accommodating requests for exorcisms and cures by Christians and non-Christians alike. They thus became an accepted part of local religious life. The daily religious life of Christians, however, centered mainly on personal participation in rituals, sacraments, and devotions and not merely around occurrences of possession or disease. Novel and fascinatingly strange Christian symbols and rituals resonated with time-honored local traditions, both in communal rites like the Corpus Christi feast and in daily devotional practices like the rosary. The Third Order, the Christian virgins (*beatas*), and the confraternities offered the needed venue to empower the most devout sector of the community. Lay leaders earned the respect of their families and their social circles through their lives of devotion and penance, as well as the investment of their possessions in the construction of churches, the printing of religious tracts, and charitable activities.

Religious life was not without tension and conflict. The Dominicans tried to exert control over orthopraxy and orthodoxy through pastoral tours and letters, the disciplinary use of the sacraments, and oral and written instruction. This clerical religious dominance was sometimes challenged by local Christians: lay leaders and Christian virgins tried to establish their spiritual power independently of priestly intermediation, or they disobeyed disciplinary rules imposed by the Dominicans. Chapters 8 and 9 explore two main areas of tension with local society and within the communities and uncover the crucial fault lines in the process of localization: ancestral rituals and marriage. These two chapters ask if Catholicism was successfully co-opted by prevailing social mores, remained a simple phenomenon of “cultural resistance” to the existing order for some sectors of the local population, or provoked some restructuring of social conventions. All three processes took place to varying degrees. These processes, traced both in prescriptive texts and in practices, illustrate how values were transmitted and show the negotiations over the borders of socio-religious toleration that transformed Fuan Catholicism into a local religion. This Christianity continues to develop and adapt to changing circumstances in Fuan, as discussed in the Conclusion.

Qing officials saw Christian conversion and religious life as a “truly unfathomable” phenomenon, and many scholars still perceive Christianity as an interloper, a disturbing force in village religion, due to its loose

and sometimes antagonistic institutional connection to local socio-religious structures. However, by appreciating the fact that so-called heterodox religious groups co-existed with state-sanctioned, gentry-led village religion, we can see Christianity as just another type of local religion. I hope this book will also help to soften the prevailing attitude of cultural dichotomization between China and the West as two essentialized and incompatible entities and to encourage a view of the experience of religious exchange as a two-way road, with many Chinese and European participants in a transnational context. Let us take a cue from one of the historical actors who inhabits the pages of this study, Fujian Governor Zhou Xuejian 周學健. When he arrested missionaries and Chinese Christians in Fuan in 1746, he reported to the Qianlong emperor:

Why do [the missionaries] desire to pursue [these activities]? Their clandestine actions and their secrecy are truly unfathomable (*shi bu ke ce* 實不可測). Upon investigation of their Western customs, we found that they are similar to us Chinese in what pertains to food and the things they like. The only difference is that in order to spread their teachings, [some of them] abandon their relatives, forfeit what they like, and commit their life to their king to spread religion until they are old or they die. They hide among commoners. Some live behind false walls and others in secret underground chambers. They are not mindful about their lives, they are scornful of laws, and they absolutely have no mental qualms about it. Their obstinacy and evil are really unfathomable (*shi bu ke ce* 實不可測). Sadly, this state of things is not limited to the foreigners spreading those teachings. When they join their religion, even Chinese people end up committing their whole life without ever changing their beliefs. And it is not that only stupid villagers are behaving like this. Even government students and students by purchase (*sheng-jian* 生監) follow their teachings their whole life, without ever paying worship to the Most Holy Master [Confucius], Guandi 關帝, and all the other gods.¹⁵

In the words of the hostile governor, we recognize the major theme of this book: Christianity became a local religion, fully supported by na-

15. See QTS, vol. 1, doc. 75, 117. Starting in the Yongzheng period, the Qing state raised the cult of the martial god Guandi to the same high level of prestige enjoyed by the cult of Confucius. The two cults represented the religious aspect of the imperial institutions in their civil and military branches, and for degree-holders to neglect those cults implied opposition to the state. On the Qing patronage of Guandi, see Duara 1988, 785. Paul Cohen's observation that both the missionary and the Chinese "viewed the other as unfathomable" (in reference to the nineteenth century) seems to echo the language of Qing officials; see CHOC, 10.1, 565.

tive commoners and literati. This was a faith that, while still perceived as foreign, had also become attractive to some Chinese and thus "their own." The coming pages attempt to explain the "unfathomable" nature of Christianity in late imperial China and detail its transformation through an exploration of the lives of Fuan Christians, the activities of the Dominican missionaries, and the reactions of Chinese elites, officials, and commoners who formed the fabric of late imperial life.

ONE

*Fuan Literati,
Jesuits, and Spanish
Friars*

Father Angel found in [Fuan] ten Christians. In order to become Christians through the water of baptism, they had gone to the land of Fuzhou, six days of travel away, searching for a Father of the Society of Jesus who travels in that land in Chinese garb in his capacity [as priest]. . . . It is not known why these ten Christians came from such a faraway place, looking for someone who could offer them this benefit, since in their land they did not even know the etymology of the word "Christian." But it is to be believed it was Heaven's [doing]. . . . If [Heaven] did not bring to their land [of Fuan] a minister to instruct them . . . , then [Heaven] led them to a place where they could find one, so that through him they could receive from God the light and grace that they lacked. They thus returned to their land very happy, since they had been unable until then to take home any teacher of the Gospel, although they had tried for a long time with all their energies, for a period of at least two months. . . . When they had become disheartened about their plan and were no longer thinking of it, God sent to the gates of their town an Angel in name and office and, I can say without exaggeration, in purity of life. . . . And although his arrival caught them by surprise, yet they were not unprepared, as they had made a residence, a church, and altar ornaments and finery for the time when God would send them someone. . . . Two of those Christians were so well instructed in the

things of our holy faith that the Father chose them as his assistants to catechize and teach those things to the others.¹

So in 1640 Diego Aduarte, first chronicler of the Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary in Manila, described the 1632 arrival of his Italian confrere Angelo Cocchi in Fuan.² In this account, Cocchi is not an active subject in the providential plan to bring Christianity to Fuan. Aduarte described him as an “angel” sent by God—a pun on his name. Yet, the subject of this passage is not the friar but the ten Christians of Fuan who, in search of a priest, traveled for six days to the provincial capital of Fuzhou. Since none of the Jesuits then in Fujian could accommodate their wishes, once they stumbled on the newly arrived Dominican friar they seized the opportunity to take him to their native county. They acted as his interpreters, arranged for his travel, and even had a residence and chapel readied for the priest before his arrival. Aduarte expressed puzzlement over the reasons for the Christians’ travel to the provincial capital in search of a priest: “It is not known why these ten Christians came from such a faraway place, looking for someone who could offer them [the] benefit [of Christianity].” The seventeenth-century chronicler’s perplexity betrays a certain uneasiness about the Chinese Christians’ actions. The origins story here does not locate Christianity’s beginnings in the heroic efforts of missionaries, so common in hagiographies, but in a local initiative by native people. Answering Aduarte’s question is particularly important for understanding the conditions within which the community, springing from a literati enterprise in this northeastern corner of Fujian province, was born. An answer also gives us insight in why and how these almost insignificant beginnings in the late Ming would lead in the Qing period to the creation of a full-fledged Christian community. From the initial circle of literati who met Cocchi in 1632, the Fuan community eventually came to include all strata of local society and developed a repertoire of ritual and devotional expressions fitting within the Chinese religious traditions of Fujian. In this chapter and Chapters 2 through 5, we will follow the development of what, almost since its inception, was an atypical cluster of Christian communities in late imperial times. Thanks to a peculiar combination of factors specific to the history of late Ming

1. Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 368.

2. For a biography of Cocchi (1597–1633), authored by Antonio Sisto Rosso, see DMB, 409–10.

and Qing Fujian, compounded with ideological and theological elements introduced by the Dominicans, the Fuan communities worked off an existing Jesuit model and created their own particular, enduring mode of religious practice.

This chapter presents the broader historical, geographical, and social contexts for the moment of encounter between the first generation of converts and the Dominicans in the 1630s. The main actors were several Fuan literati and a group of friars, mostly of Spanish descent. The Fuan literati, albeit in marginal ways and on a small scale, participated in the political, economic, and religious changes reshaping life in late Ming China. Like many of their contemporaries, they were caught in the machinery of the examination system and charged with daily managerial roles in their families and lineages. They were, however, also affected by the factional political and philosophical struggles shaking the empire, and like the protagonists of public life in the imperial capitals and in the cultural and economic core of Jiangnan along the lower reaches of the Yangzi river, they too sought new solutions to the old problems of governance, morality, and personal salvation. The friars, on the other hand, represented the edge of the Spanish empire's religious vanguard, and they struggled to reconcile models of evangelization developed within the New World's colonial context with the particular challenge of China's powerful non-Christian polity. The fabled empire of Cathay had attracted their evangelistic zeal since the times of Columbus, but in the reality of China, unlike in America, the friars learned that only their words and example, and not the weapons of a colonial government, assured conversion. The literati's quest for religious answers to their existential dilemmas confronted the friars and their new religion with its demands. The long path to localization of Christianity in late imperial Fuan was sustained by the larger, complex social and religious landscape.

Community Founders: The Literati of Fuan County

The first generation of budding Christian community leaders met by Angelo Cocchi in 1632 enjoyed local prestige, which derived from their status as students and degree-holders in the state examination system. This status granted them fiscal privileges and career opportunities in the imperial bureaucracy. The intellectual engagement of Fuan literati with Christianity predated by some years the Dominican presence in Fuan. It

began when a handful of local literati came into contact with the Christian religious message through the efforts of the Jesuits in Fujian. By the early 1630s, Jesuit missions had been established in most of the coastal prefectures of the province under the leadership of the Italian Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), but the region of Fuan had never been visited by any of the peripatetic missionaries stationed in Fujian (see Map 1.1). Nevertheless, a tiny Christian community developed in Fuan as a by-product of the Society of Jesus's method of indirect evangelization. At this early stage, the community's members were local students who had received baptism in the provincial capital at the hands of the Jesuits. The Jesuit Annual Letter of 1627 relates how the first leaders of the group became Catholic: "[Father Giulio Aleni] baptized two natives of the town of Fuan, which is five days away by land from the capital where the Father is. They were there [in Fuzhou] for their business, and hearing news of the Law of God, they went to listen [to Aleni]. . . . One [bore] the surname Guo [郭], and the Christian name Joakim." The "business" the document refers to was the triennial provincial examination for the bureaucracy, held in Fuzhou in 1627. The Jesuits used these occasions to make themselves known to the large number of provincial literati gathered for the exams and to attract some of them to Christianity.³

These Fujianese literati were interested in the mix of moral teachings, ritual prescriptions, and scientific knowledge offered by the Celestial Teachings (Tianxue 天學) of the Jesuits, and in the early decades of the seventeenth century they hoped that Christianity might offer solutions to the moral and political crisis of the Ming empire, which was mired in daunting military and economic problems. Some Fujianese Christians sought to contribute to the broad movement for moral and political regeneration that characterized this period of dynastic decline, and by the late 1620s and 1630 several of them shared the moral and political aims of the Restoration Society (Fushe 復社). This political organization advocated a renewal of Confucian culture through improvements in education, rejection of formalized essay writing, and active participation in national as well as local administration. A glimpse at the intersection between the Fujianese circles of local political

3. Quotation from "Littera Annua" of 1627, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, *Jesuítas na Ásia* 49–V-8, f. 188r; cf. Dudink 1997, 198. Joakim's surname is spelled "Guê" in the original manuscript; his first name is more commonly spelled "Joaquín" in Spanish sources. On Aleni, see Menegon 1994b; and Lippiello and Malek 1997.



reformists and Christian literati in the late 1630s and early 1640s is seen in a list of contributors enlisted to help in editing and funding a publication project by Li Jiubiao 李九標, a prominent convert from Haikou 海口 in Fuqing 福清 county, south of Fuzhou. With the help of many friends, including several Catholics, Li published in his native place an anthology entitled *Pillow Book* (*Zhenshu* 枕書, 1640), which contained writings by representative members of the Restoration Society and the Donglin 東林 party who had lost their lives during the purges ordered by the eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568–1627). Among the supporters of the project were two prominent literati leaders of the Fuan Catholic community, Joaquín Guo Bangyong 郭邦雍 (ca. 1582–1649), the “Joaquim Guo” whom Aleni had baptized in 1627, and Juan Miao Shixiang 繆士珣 (?–1649). Christian literati sought in the Celestial Teachings not only a political and moral recipe to heal the empire but also a set of nourishing religious practices and devotions. The “benefit” of Christianity mentioned by Aduarte was, mainly, the prospect of gaining personal salvation. Joining the new teachings meant a person had to acquire spiritual methods and rituals to purify himself from sin and so be able to stay on the moral path to salvation, preparing for the passage from this life to a state of eternal bliss after death. The late Ming was a period characterized by vigorous spiritual quests among the empire’s elites, ranging from experiments in philosophical enlightenment like those by the neo-Confucian thinker Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) and his school, to the Buddhist leanings of the iconoclast Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602), to the explosion of interest in morality books and ledgers of merit and demerit, to Chan meditation, to fascination with the teachings of the missionaries. Fuan literati partook of this general climate of spiritual effervescence.⁴

Catholicism was not simply a personal intellectual and mystical quest, however. It also entailed a communal spirit and centered on the joint celebration of sacraments, on common prayer, and on charitable activities. A pivotal element of these collective practices was the priest, who could not only instruct individuals preparing for baptism but also,

4. See dates of the triennial examinations in Fujian in Liu Haifeng and Zhuang Mingshui 1996, 149. On the intersection of Christian and Confucian reformist scholarly networks, and their political and ethical agendas, see, e.g., *CHOC*, 8.2, 810–33; Zürcher 1997a; Dudink 1997; *HCC*, 421; and Huang Yi-long 2005, 65–130. For recent assessments of the Jesuit method of evangelization in China, see *HCC* and Brockey 2007.

and most important, celebrate rituals. After their conversion in the late 1620s, Fuan Christians tried to make do without a priest in residence for a few years. These men, instructed in the fundamentals of the faith, must have felt isolated and in need of spiritual guidance and assistance, as did the brother of Li Jiubiao, Li Jiugong 李九功, who wrote of a spiritual crisis that struck him in 1635 in his native Haikou:

While I was studying on the coast [in my hometown], enlightened teachers and helpful friends were faraway, and thus I desired someone to accompany me in this dangerous world, [feeling] as if I was treading on snowy ground on a dangerous slope. I, this poor fellow, am endowed with a weak nature: alone and without help, how could I avoid the calamity of falling [into sin]?

Li found solace and sustenance in pious readings on the lives of saints, and so did the Fuan literati, who brought back to their native place the religious books published by the Jesuits in Fuzhou and had them reprinted at their own expense. They distributed them to other local students and engaged in discussions on the new teachings. They read devotional tracts and prayed on their own. They even built a place of worship by turning the “studio of a relative of one of the ten Christians” into a chapel. The literati, then, and not the missionaries, took the initiative in setting down the first building blocks of the future community, creating an acceptable inroad for the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven into local society and unlocking local family networks to missionaries.⁵

Since they had been unable to attract a Jesuit to their county, when the literati learned of Angelo Cocchi's presence in Fuzhou, they seized the occasion and asked the Dominican to travel to Fuan. The friar was happy to oblige. They physically arranged—as the chronicler of the Fujian Dominican mission Victorio Riccio (1621–85) writes—the transfer of the religious expert from Fuzhou to Fuan. Cocchi was initially dependent on them, relying on their social network and linguistic skills to establish the mission. He limited himself to fulfilling only a priest's necessary liturgical and sacramental functions, leaving most of the instruction of neophytes to the converted literati. The literati “used to respond

5. Quotation from the preface to the collection of Christian edifying miracle stories *A Mirror of Self-Cultivation* (*Lixiu yijian* 勵修一鑑, 1635–45?) compiled by Li Jiugong, reproduced in Xu Zongze 1989, 64–65; cf. Dudink 1997, 157–58. On the layout of the chapel, see Caballero's description as quoted in GH, 1: 58. On the reprinting of Christian books in Fuan, see “Littera Annua” of 1627, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, *Jesuitas na Ásia* 49–V-8, f. 188r.

to the doubts proposed by the gentiles instead of Father Angel, since his language was still faulty.” These quiet and relatively smooth beginnings were, however, a deceptive opening act and did not foreshadow the unusual path that the Fuan community would take under the guidance of the Dominicans in the following years, which were characterized by internal conflict and clashes with local society.⁶

The conflicted experience of Fuan Christian literati in the last decades of the Ming period is encapsulated by the life of Joaquín Guo Bangyong. Born around 1582, he was a member of the Guo lineage of Ludou 鹿斗 ward, in the county seat of Fuan. “Son of very honorable parents, [and] . . . an excellent student of Chinese letters” in the Fuan Confucian school, he was a “stipend student” (*linsheng* 廩生) receiving special government emoluments to cover his study and travel expenses and was certified as best qualified in his county to participate in the provincial examinations. As we saw, it was during the examinations in Fuzhou in 1627 that he met Aleni and received baptism. After his conversion, he decided to take back to his native county “a great number of Christian books.” He had traveled the five days separating Fuan from the provincial capital in a private sedan chair, likely paid for by the local government, but on his way back he saved his travel allowance, probably by using inexpensive local transportation, and instead spent the funds to have the Christian books recarved on woodblocks to reprint them. During the first period of Dominican presence in Fuan, he “acted as [Cocchi’s] feet and hands, both in teaching him the language, as well as in catechizing, and giving instruction to all those who approached the priest regarding the Catholic faith, so much so that he can be called the founder of the Christian community (*cristiandad*) of Fuan.” He threw himself with great energy into the new enterprise and was instrumental in successfully settling the first mission. Guo was already 45 at the time and probably old enough to realize that he had little hope of earning the coveted *juren* 舉人 degree for which he had been studying for so long. His new Christian identity offered him a creative way to use his gifts to contribute to the welfare of his hometown. Christianity also afforded him an opportunity to work outside the approved bureaucratic

6. Quotation from RH, f. 233v, where we also read: “Juan Mieu [i.e., Miao Shixiang], together with Joaquín Ko [Guo Bangyong] and other Christians arranged (*negociaron*) and accomplished the transfer of the holy man [Angelo Cocchi] to the town of Fuan, where no minister had ever set foot.”

channels and lineage organizations while continuing to nurture his Confucian reformist spirit.⁷

Even if Guo had still entertained hopes for an official career, his dreams were shattered ten years later when the county magistrate stripped him of the *linsheng* status for following his new credo and protecting the missionaries during the first serious anti-Christian disturbances in Fuan. Conflict over sensitive issues, such as ancestral rituals and female chastity, provoked a confrontation between the friars and their most faithful followers on one hand and local lineage elders and government officials on the other. This event was a turning point in Guo's life: already in his mid-fifties and a widower, as well as an active Christian for a decade, he decided to forsake the bureaucratic path to worldly success and instead follow the Dominican priests in exile to the Philippines. Guo is the first Chinese literatus to have lived for a prolonged period inside a Christian environment outside China and to have received a thorough Christian education in a priory.

Between 1638 and 1641, Guo resided in one of the Dominican parishes in the region of Bataán, on the western shore of Manila Bay, where he worked with the Dominicans on the compilation of a Chinese grammar and a Chinese-Spanish dictionary (see Map 1.2). We learn from the chronicler Riccio that during his stay in the Philippines "[Joaquín Guo] complied with all the religious duties of the friars, as if he were one of them. He woke up with them at midnight for [the early morning prayers] of the matins, engaged in meditation at the prescribed times, took corporal disciplines, slept on bare wooden boards, and followed the Order's calendar of fasting, without ever eating meat." This deepening of his religious experience and prolonged retreat transformed him into an excellent ally and companion of the missionaries for their return to China to continue the interrupted work. After a brief novitiate in Manila, Guo became a member of the lay branch of the Dominicans, the Third Order, and in 1642 helped the missionaries sail back to Fuan, where, thanks to the influence that his age and status exerted, he helped restore the spirit of Fuan's Christians, who had been battered by the 1637 campaign. "After the priest, he was considered the [most

7. Quotation is from RH, f. 234v. On Guo's journey to Fuzhou and his use of his "viaticum" (travel allowance) to purchase and reprint Christian literature in Fuan, see "Littera Annua" of 1627, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, *Jesuítas na Ásia* 49-V-8, f. 188r.



Map 1.2 Routes used by the Dominicans to reach Taiwan and Mindong from the Philippines (port of Cavite). In the late Ming period the preferred maritime route was through the Spanish bases in northern Taiwan (lost to the Dutch in 1642); in the Qing the missionaries entered Fujian through the regions of Xiamen and Zhangzhou and, later, following changes in the Qing coastal policy, via Macau and Guangzhou.

authoritative] teacher in the Law of the Lord, and he truly was perfectly instructed in it. Any minister, without misgivings, could charge him with the teaching of the Gospel over those men. And he did so with much authority and gravitas, as it is necessary in this kingdom.”⁸

His personal engagement with Christianity laid the foundations for the future development of the communities of Fuan, and the Dominicans acknowledged Guo’s essential contribution by calling him the “founder” of that *cristiandad*. He was not alone, and other Fuan men, perhaps with less determination but in good numbers, did similar work. Guo’s life underlines the crucial role played by the first generation of lay Christians in opening the gates of Fuan to the friars. The commitment by this handful of local men and, later, by many women, made possible the growth of the community. Guo’s story also illustrates some salient elements that continued to characterize the history of Fuan Christianity in the seventeenth century. A paradoxical contrast between normalcy and eccentricity frames both the life of Guo and the history of his Christian community from Ming to Qing. On one hand, lay initiative always came from mainstream elements of local society—degree-holders, family heads, or promising brides-to-be. These residents of Fuan gave the mantle of respectability to the new community. On the other hand, the Confucianized Christianity typical of Jesuit communities gave way to a brand of Christianity tolerant of those aspects of socio-religious practice compatible with European morality but occasionally subversive of some of the basic pillars of patriarchy, including ancestral veneration and marriage. Those were the elements that gave Fuan Christianity its peculiar flavor and brought it closer to the Chinese heterodox groups persecuted by the imperial government than to state-approved religions and cults.

Before the Dominicans: Fuan Literati and the Jesuits

A contemporary observer would have been hard pressed to detect elements of this religious eccentricity among the Fuan Christian literati before the arrival of the Dominicans. The Fuan community initially developed as an offshoot of the Fujian Jesuit mission, during what scholars

8. Quotations are from RH, f. 235v; on the 1637 anti-Christian campaign, see Menegon 1997; a copy of the dictionary compiled by Díez and Guo, entitled *Vocabulario de Letra China*, is held in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia China* 412; see GH, 5: 35.

have identified as the second phase of Catholic missionary diffusion in late imperial China. The first phase (1580s–1610s) was characterized by the pioneering efforts of Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), and their contemporaries. It entailed recruitment of Confucian elites and officials, accommodation to the Chinese lifestyle and rituals, and indirect religious propaganda, which combined Christian teachings with European sciences and arts to attract and hold the attention of educated Chinese. During this first phase, the Jesuits attached themselves to literati in official positions, who regularly moved from one administrative post to the next. In the process the missionaries visited a number of prefectures and counties, and, thanks to the protection or the influence of their patrons, they finally found places suitable for the establishment of residences, well positioned administratively and geographically.⁹

After the first few decades of missionary work, the second phase of missionary diffusion began, between 1621 and 1630. Christian literati baptized by the Jesuits in important administrative centers started returning to their native places for a variety of reasons and established small communities at the subprefecture or county level, inviting the priests to visit and sometimes building a residence for them in their locale. The Fujian mission began in 1625 under the leadership of Giulio Aleni precisely under these circumstances. Before reaching this mission, between 1621 and 1624, Aleni had been living in the Hangzhou mansion of the prominent Christian literatus Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠 (1557–1627), where he compiled scientific works on geography, cartography, and geometry. In 1623, for example, he published his famous descriptive atlas of the world, the *Record of Areas Beyond the Tributary States* (*Zhi-fang wai ji* 職方外紀), with a preface by his patron Yang Tingyun, followed in quick succession by treatises on Aristotelian psychology, Euclidean geometry, and the European educational system. The fame Aleni earned through his publications and his contacts in Hangzhou as a “Western literatus” opened a door for him in Fujian, where he had

9. A summary of the Jesuit method can be found in Zürcher 1990; a more extensive treatment is available in Brockey 2007. For an outline of the Jesuit missionary expansion, see HCC, “The Creation of Christian Communities,” 534–36. Standardt’s conclusions are based mainly on the large quantity of data gathered by Joseph Dehergne. For a list of Dehergne’s geographical articles, partly inspired by the tradition of regional history of the Annales School and its interest in “serial” data and statistical studies, see HCC, 572.

been invited by a family of converts recently transferred there. In the fall of 1624 in Hangzhou, Aleni met the former grand secretary Ye Xianggao 葉向高 (1559–1627), who was on his way to his native Fuzhou in Fujian for retirement. Ye was a noted sympathizer of the Donglin group and had resigned his official post in the imperial capital because of his open opposition to the policies of the notorious eunuch Wei Zhongxian. The former grand secretary, who had befriended the Beijing Jesuits, extended his protection to Aleni, who, once in Fuzhou, was welcomed in local cultured circles. Partly due to the master-disciple relationship of a number of Fujianese literati with the prominent Christian scholar-officials Xu Guangqi 徐光啓 (1562–1633) and Li Zhizao 李之藻 (d. 1630) residing in Jiangnan, Aleni was able to strengthen his network of scholarly friends, including a circle of noted local poets. Most of these literati did not convert, but the esteem shown the Italian missionary in their poetic eulogies and prefaces publicized the missionary's activities. Fascination with the Jesuit teachings was fueled by the diffusion and reprinting of scientific books like the *Record of Areas Beyond the Tributary States*. The high point of missionary propaganda within literati circles in the provincial capital was the publication of the *Records of the Discussions in Sanshan About the Teachings* (*Sanshan lunxue ji* 三山論學紀, ca. 1629), a record of conversations held in Fuzhou in 1627 between Aleni and Ye Xianggao. The treatise explored Confucian principles and Christian dogmas and morality, including such topics as the creation of the world by God, the existence of paradise and hell, and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Poems written in honor of Aleni by some literati, including Ye, were appended to the records, and Ye praised some aspects of Christian doctrine as “deeply complementary to our Confucian doctrine.” By saying so, he expressed the attitude of several important late Ming intellectuals, who found the Jesuits' austere moral teachings and their opposition to Buddhism and other popular religions rather congenial and compatible with Confucian ideas of cosmic and societal order.¹⁰

10. On late Ming intellectual reception of Christian ideas, see Willard Peterson's chapter “Learning from Heaven: The Introduction of Christianity and Other Western Ideas into Late Ming China” in *CHOC*, 8.2, 789–839. For a biographical study of Aleni, see Menegon 1994b; for a detailed account of the *Zhifang waiji*'s contents and its diffusion in China, see Luk 1977. For a biography of Ye Xianggao, see *DMB*, 1567–70; on his role within the Donglin faction, see Dardess 2002, *passim*. For details on the encounter between Aleni and Ye, see Luk 1988; and Menegon

Aleni's network-building among prominent Fujianese literati was part of an empire-wide Jesuit plan to create an influential public sympathetic to Christianity. This strategy facilitated official protection of Christian activities and, in case of local opposition, gave the Jesuits direct access to powerful allies, well connected through scholarly and official circles all over the country up to the imperial capital. By 1630, when this step had been accomplished in Fujian, Aleni shifted his focus to the ultimate objective: converting the Fujianese to Christianity. Until then Aleni had reissued in Fujian Jesuit scientific texts and treatises first published in Zhejiang. These dealt with Christian morality only in general terms, such as his popular treatise on the reasons for the existence of God, which was entitled *The Origin of the Myriad Things* (*Wanwu zhenyuan* 萬物真原, 1628), and they contained prefaces by prominent Fujianese literati and retired officials, mostly non-Christian. In all likelihood, these were some of the works that Guo Bangyong took to Fuan to make his reprints. Starting in 1629, however, Aleni began to engage in pure religious propaganda, publishing at least seven titles on religious topics, including, for example, hagiographies of the prominent Chinese Christian Yang Tingyun and of the Jesuit mission's founder Matteo Ricci, books on the sacraments, and a series of works on the figure of Christ, including a famous illustrated life of Christ entitled *Illustrated Explanation of the Lord of Heaven's Incarnation* (*Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie* 天主降生出像經解, 1637). He also reprinted collections of the lives of saints compiled by other Jesuits. Only converts (lower degree-holders and advanced students or *xiucai* 秀才) wrote prefaces to

1994b, 141–46. Lin Jinshui has compiled a list of almost 230 people of different rank and importance whom Aleni met during his career in Fujian. According to Lin's statistics, among Aleni's acquaintances there were holders of all academic degrees, including 31 *jinshi*, 10 *juren*, 4 *jiangsheng*, 10 *gongsheng*, and 9 *shengyuan*. Many also held official positions, and 33 converted to Catholicism (including 4 *jinshi*, 1 *juren*, 1 *jiangsheng*, 6 *xiangsheng*, and 8 *gongsheng*). The poems in honor of Aleni are collected in the manuscript "Collection of Sublime Orthodoxy of a Prosperous Age. First Collection of Poems Offered to the Masters by the Gentlemen of Fujian" ("Xichao chongzheng ji: Minzhong zhugong zeng Taixi zhu xiansheng shi chujì" 熙朝崇正集—閩中諸公贈泰西諸先生詩初集, 4 *juan*, Fuzhou, n.d.), copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France reproduced in *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian*, 633–91; an Italian translation is Brezzi et al. 2005. On the Christian literati circles in Fujian, see Lin Jinshui 1992; and Dudink 1997. On the diffusion of Aleni's works in Fujian, see Standaert 1985, 25. On the contents of *Sanshan lunxue ji*, see Luk 1988; and Menegon 1994b, 146–49.

these works. In the post-1630 period of missionary expansion, with the support of local literati Aleni and a few companions who followed suit were able to establish Christian communities in Fuzhou and the main prefectures of the coastal zone, which were the most economically and culturally advanced parts of the province (see Map 1.1). At least initially, the Jesuits were not very active in the mountainous parts of northern Fujian, including Fuan where the Dominicans would establish their mission.¹¹

Local Elites Within Fuan and Within the Christian Community

The importance of literati engagement in spreading Christianity in Fuan was thus not a new phenomenon in late Ming Christianity. In the five decades preceding the arrival of the Dominicans, the Jesuits had carefully constructed an identity for themselves as “Western literati” (*Xiru* 西儒) and religious masters. By donning literati robes and caps and by exuding an air of great authority, gravity, and wisdom through their grasp of the Confucian classics and Chinese ritual customs, their European scientific knowledge, and their austere celibate life, the Jesuits presented themselves as foreign peers, if not masters, of the erudite intellectuals and officials they met. The role of masters, in moral, ritual, and scientific matters alike, was certainly what they performed in the milieu of converted lower-degree holders that formed the backbone of their communities. As Catholic priests, the Dominicans also partook of

11. On the Jesuit strategy of cultivating personal relationships with literati, see HCC, 540–41. For a general overview of Aleni’s activities in China, see Menegon 1994b; on Aleni’s books in Fujian, see Dudink 1997, 142–43, 152–53. On Fujian’s coast, Jesuit missionary stations included Fuqing (first reached in 1630), where some of the most active converts lived; Putian (1631); Yongchun 永春, Anxi 安溪, and Dehua 德化 (1632); Quanzhou 泉州 (1626), where Aleni’s sympathizers were of higher rank; and Zhangzhou 漳州 (1633), where the Jesuits found fierce opposition to their teachings from Buddhist literati. Only in the latter part of Aleni’s life, when he became vice provincial (1641–49) of the Jesuit Southern Vice Province, did the Jesuits proselytize in northern Fujian, especially in the counties of Shaowu 邵武, Jian’ou 建甌, Jianning 建寧, Taining 泰寧, and the region of the Wuyi 武夷 Mountains. For descriptions of Jesuit touring of the Fujianese communities, see Gouvea 1998, 99–117; and Zhang Xianqing 1999, chap. 3; on the missions in northern Fujian, see Lin Jinshui and Wu Huaimin 1994.

this magisterial and ritual image that the Jesuits had built. This explains the ease with which the first group of Fuan literati enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of Cocchi on the scene.

When the Dominican Cocchi arrived in Fuzhou in 1632 and finally succeeded in remaining in Fujian with the support of Fuan literati, he, unaware of this prior activity, plugged himself into the second phase of diffusion of Christianity. He thus bypassed contacts with officials and found support from a ready, localized network of lower-degree holders, made up of the converted literati returned home from minor posts or the examinations. As a consequence, the Dominicans had little need to establish direct contacts with officialdom and left that task to their converts, who, by virtue of their degrees, had legal access to magistrates and commanded the respect of lineages. Although theoretically interested in bureaucratic careers, these members of the local elite had little hope of earning a higher degree and leaving their native place, and they focused their energies on the local arena.

A brief examination of the physical environment and the social organization of these literati's native county of Fuan reveals some of the particularities of that corner of Fujian and also its similarity with other parts of the South China economic macroregion. In particular, we can appreciate how local elites occupied a position of great influence within Fuan, despite their relatively low status as compared with elites in more prominent parts of Fujian and the empire. Guo Bangyong's story exemplifies the influence of Fuan elites, which greatly enhanced the chances of successfully spreading the new religion.

The region of Fuan and the surrounding Funing 福寧 subprefecture, traditionally known as Mindong (literally "Eastern Fujian"), was physically isolated by mountains on three sides and bordered by the South China Sea on its southeastern edge. Fairly lightly populated, the area depended on farming and fishing for economic sustenance. The Ming geographical compendia on Fujian, *General Gazetteer of the Eight [Prefectures] of Fujian* (*Ba Min tongzhi* 八閩通志, 1491) and *The Book of Fujian* (*Min shu* 閩書, 1620s), describe it as a self-sufficient region, where people living along the valleys close to the mountains tilled the limited amount of land, and those living along the sea fished, dug up clams, and harvested salt. During the Ming, the commercialization that was changing Chinese society in the nearby prosperous region of Jiangnan and in the other coastal prefectures of Fujian little affected northeastern Fujian, as we gather from the *Min shu*: "People [in Funing] do not have need for

merchants, and even in bad years they do not go hungry. Their customs are simple and unique; they are peaceful and quiet.” From the Song to the Ming period, the major crops were rice (often used as a currency to pay for goods and taxes) and wheat. The introduction in the Wanli period (1573–1620) of sweet potatoes imported from America through the Philippines eased the pressure on cultivable land, and sweet potatoes became a common staple in the local farmers’ diet. A number of commercial crops such as tea, sugarcane, soybeans, and peanuts also started to gain importance in the late Ming. At the same time, mountain villages began growing ramie and jute, used to produce textiles and rope, and in counties such as Ningde 寧德 and Xiapu 霞浦, immigrants from southwestern Fujian introduced the cultivation of indigo, used as a dye. Although there had been some interregional trade of natural products with neighboring southern Zhejiang and Fuzhou prefecture since Tang times, Mindong remained mostly self-sufficient (except for the import of grain during recurrent times of shortage) until the eighteenth century, when commercialized crops started to be produced in greater quantities for international markets. The counties of Fuan and Fuding, in particular, produced special varieties of teas (green, white, Wulong, and other types) that were sent by land to Guangdong for export overseas.¹²

Labor relations do not seem to have been particularly tense and were subsumed under the more pervasive power of local lineages. The *Min shu*

12. The romanized form “Fogán,” deriving from the local dialect term for Fuan, appears in Spanish as the name of both the administrative seat and the entirety of Fuan county (福安縣), but missionaries often used it as a general name for the whole region of northeastern Fujian, coinciding with their mission territory. Fogán in a broad sense thus corresponded to what is historically known as “Mindong,” literally “Eastern Min,” Min being the ancient name of Fujian province. In late imperial times, most of today’s Mindong was occupied by the administrative territory of Funing (nowadays Xiapu), seat of a subprefecture (*zhou* 州) that was elevated to the rank of prefecture (*fu* 府) in 1734. Fuan was the most important county in that prefecture. Most Catholic activities initially centered on Fuan county, but over time extended to other nearby locales in Mindong, and thus in this book I often use Mindong as a broad geographic unit of analysis. The quotation on the agricultural nature of the region comes from *Min shu* (He Qiaoyuan 1994: 947; cf. Miao Pinmei 1999, 20), and shows much continuity with the present, since around 85 percent of the population of Mindong (i.e., 2,423,300 out of 2,860,200 inhabitants) were still farmers as of 1990. On the chronic shortage of grain in Fujian, see Tang 1995, 506–15; and Rowe 2001, *passim*. On granaries in Fuan, see *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 515; and Tang 1995, 411–12. On local crops, see Tang 1995, 415; on tea in Fujian, see Gardella 1994.

hints at the ubiquity of residentially concentrated lineages with common property (“elder brother and younger brother do not separate from each other”), and mostly nuclear household units made up of husband and wife and their children (“a man and a woman make a family”). Lineages emerged in the Song period as a response to the need for organizing collective labor in the valleys and along the shores for reclamation of coastal land and of hillsides. Lineages compiled genealogies, constructed ancestral halls for common rituals, and administered common property, but with few exceptions, they did not reach the large membership found in the central plains of Fuzhou or Putian.

The *Min shu* presents the difference in labor engagement between local literati (*shi* 士) and commoners (*min* 民) as negligible, a sign that local elites were owner-cultivators, and that absentee landlords were, at least until the mid-Ming, rare. This did not mean that local society was devoid of tensions and violence. The mid- and late Ming periods, in particular, were characterized by a diffused militarization in response to piracy inflicted by the “Japanese pirates” (*wokou* 倭寇), especially in the Jiajing reign (1522–66). The region became dotted with over a hundred small fortresses, built by local communities under the leadership of lineage heads to defend themselves from those roving bandits. This heavily militarized territorial organization disappeared for the most part in the early Qing (1660s), after the enforcement of the notorious government policy of coastal evacuation. The evacuation, implemented to break the resistance of anti-Qing elements and of local bandits, depressed local communities economically but also shifted military duties to the state with the creation of a regional garrison in Funing. After the difficult periods of the Ming-Qing transition and the coastal evacuation, which stunted the recovery of the region and kept it underpopulated, the eighteenth century brought prosperity to Fujian. Thanks to lineage organizations, there was little rent resistance. The population increases of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, diminished the supply of cultivable land, and a small percentage of local elites and richer farmers began concentrating a sizable portion of the cultivated land into their own hands, pushing many previously independent farmers into tenantry.

The influence of the Mindong gentry in local life during the late Ming and Qing periods derived less from their official status as degree-holders and more from prominence earned as lineage elders and managers. Degrees were obviously sought as a tax shelter and maintained lin-

age and individual prestige, but the low rate of success of Funing prefecture's candidates in the provincial and metropolitan examinations suggests that elites felt pulled toward the local arena. The families that had been producing the majority of higher degree-holders in Fuan up until the end of the Song, for example, had by the late Ming and early Qing retreated into relative obscurity in the provincial arena.¹³

In sum, the available data on late imperial Mindong paint a picture of a land relatively isolated and self-sufficient, without great social tensions, and, at least in principle, under the sway of lineage organizational power. This situation changed substantially only starting in the mid-eighteenth century, with the introduction of cash crops in the region and a resulting affluence available to independent farmers and tenants, who were by then linked to international markets. These general characteristics, which indicate a relative socioeconomic backwardness and social stability, might have facilitated the growth of Christianity. Official control was rather light in the territory of Funing, due to its relative remoteness and its sparse population, and this in turn resulted in administrative marginality. Local elites, rather than the state representatives, mattered most in social and religious control at the county level, especially in the Ming. This centrality of local elites, whose status may have been modest by empire-wide standards but was remarkable in the local arena, partly explains how a few devoted Christian literati, exemplified by Guo Bangyong, were capable of building the basis for a resilient community of believers in the new teachings against rather formidable cultural odds. In Fuan, the activism of these local Christians, and not the administrative link between missionaries and officials, played the critical role in the initial transmission of Christianity. In fact, if officials had been directly involved with the friars, they would have probably objected to their presence in Fujian on the grounds of national security, since these priests were agents of a foreign imperial power, the Spanish, that was encroaching on China's southern maritime borders.

13. Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, out of the 76 *jinsi*-holders from Fuan, 56 were members of the important lineages of the Mushui valley, such as the Xue and Chen of Liancun, the Liu of Suyang, and in lesser numbers, the Miao of Muyang, the lineage of Miao Shixiang. By the Ming and Qing period, these lineages stopped producing holders of higher degrees in any significant number. See Miao Zaizuo n.d., 1; and Liu Haifeng and Zhuang Mingshui 1996, 7–8.

The Dominicans as Spaniards: Chinese Perceptions

The enthusiasm and initiative demonstrated by the first small circle of Fuan's Confucian students in creating a welcoming environment for the friars first in Fuzhou and later in Fuan are indeed surprising given the circumstances surrounding the 1632 arrival of Angelo Cocchi. Rather than the "angel" in resplendent attire depicted in Aduarte's hagiography, Cocchi was a ragtag, shipwrecked Spaniard, without credentials and belongings, when he arrived in Fuzhou. Juan de Alcarazo, commander of the Spanish garrison established in 1626 on Taiwan, then not as yet part of the Chinese empire, deputized Cocchi and his confrere Tomás de Sierra to lead a small embassy to Fujian in late 1631. The mission was an attempt to gain Chinese support and contain the Dutch, who had occupied the Penghu Islands in 1622 and had then been forced out to southern Taiwan in 1624. The two Dominicans were charged with delivering an official request to the governor of Fujian "without mentioning a thing about the faith, so as not to fall from his graces, so that he may consider establishing trade with the island." In fact, the embassy was not simply a political and diplomatic mission to attract Fujianese commercial interests to the Spanish base on Taiwan; it was also a covert attempt by the Dominicans to establish a foothold in China. Dominican friars were not new to these dual roles of diplomat and evangelizer. Since they were considered experts in Chinese matters due to their charitable and catechetical experience with southern Fujianese immigrants in Manila, friars had already traveled to Fujian in 1593 and 1604 as part of Spanish diplomatic missions, and in 1619 they organized a botched embassy to Guangdong and Fujian. Cocchi's diplomatic mission likewise failed. The Chinese crew hired to transport them to the mainland mutinied and robbed the envoys of the silver gifts meant for Chinese officials. Sierra was killed in the ensuing melee, but Cocchi miraculously reached the mainland with a few survivors. When he finally arrived in Fuzhou and tried to contact Governor Xiong Wen-can 熊文燦 (d. 1640), he was rebuffed. Although the authorities had already arrested the mutineers and recovered the silver gifts, Xiong sent the Spanish survivors back to Taiwan on the pretext that they had lost their diplomatic credentials.¹⁴

14. Quotation from Aduarte 1962–63, 358; cf. Borao, ed., 2001, 153. Biographical information on Alcarazo can be found in Borao, ed., 2001, xxviii–xxix. The

For many reasons, the early attempts of the Manila Dominicans at evangelizing had few results. First, their association with the Spanish colony of the Philippines meant that, for the leaders of late Ming China, the friars from Luzon embodied the dangers of a maritime power on the southern fringes of the empire, fringes that authorities had a hard time controlling. Contemporary Chinese officials like Xiong had only a fragmentary understanding of the activities of Europeans in Asian waters, but they knew enough to frame the friars' activities as part of two, connected processes: the arrival of the feared, warlike *Folangji* 佛狼機 (i.e., Franks or Feringis, as Iberians were called in the Philippines and the South China Sea); and the diffusion of Christianity, the religion brought to China by Jesuit missionaries starting in the 1580s, under the protection of the Portuguese in Macau.

Before the Spaniards, the Portuguese had been the first to receive the name "Franks" and had become the stuff of infamous legends in sixteenth-century China. Cantonese officials described the Franks as kidnappers of women and young men, slave traders, and child eaters. The violent nature of the Portuguese and the strength of their vessels and cannons were the most common refrains in official Chinese documents. As one official wrote, "Their glittering sabers and smoking cannons fill the mountains and the seas." By the time the Spaniards appeared in Asian waters in the 1570s, the well-established Portuguese, fearful of their Iberian competitors, engaged in a campaign to smear their name and were more than happy to transfer their own tarnished reputation to the newcomers. In the 1580s the bishop of Manila, the Dominican Domingo Salazar, denounced the "unchristian" rumor-mongering by Macau merchants about the Castilians to Philip II, king of the temporarily unified crowns of Spain and Portugal. Macanese depicted the Spaniards to the Chinese as "robbing corsairs, who would go [to China] only to steal and sack their cities." These allegations, carefully planted by the Spaniards' main commercial rivals, had a certain degree of truth. Between 1576 and 1588, colonial officials and some members of the Manila clergy submitted to the king and his Council of

events of Cocchi's arrival are narrated in a letter by Cocchi from Fuzhou, dated March 3, 1632, published in GH, 1: 49–52. For a biography of Xiong Wencan by Fang Chaoying, see *DMB*, 562–66; see also Wong 1981–83, 126–28. Xiong was a devout Buddhist and possibly this also played a role in his obstruction of Cocchi's stay.

Indies a rather fantastic military plan to conquer China. This plan remained secret and unknown to Chinese authorities, but had they learned about it, their suspicions of Spanish intentions would certainly have been confirmed.¹⁵

The Spaniards' exploitation of Chinese laborers and recurrent massacres of Chinese immigrants in the Philippines only worsened Chinese perceptions. Fearful of the immigrants' economic power, of their numbers, and of their imagined attempts to take over the Philippines, the Spanish colonial government perpetrated a series of carnages in Manila's Chinese quarter, such as the huge massacre of around 20,000 Chinese of Fujianese descent in 1603 and another in 1639. The 1603 massacre, in particular, resonated deeply at the Ming court, as the Jesuit Matteo Ricci mentioned in his correspondence.¹⁶

The cruelty and warlike nature of the Spaniards hit especially close to home for the southern Fujianese, who had lost relatives in the mass killings in Manila. Chinese authorities considered the unbridled emigration to the Philippines as well as commerce, smuggling, and piracy pressing issues, as shown in several essays by southern governors and officials in the late Ming collection *Texts on Statecraft of the August Ming Dynasty* (*Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編, 1638–39). Moreover, the legitimacy of the Spanish presence in Asia was questionable, in Chinese eyes. The "Chapter on Luzon" in the *Ming History* (*Ming shi* 明史), a summation of official knowledge on Ming Sino-Philippine relations compiled in the early Qing, accuses the Spaniards of illegiti-

15. On Ming perceptions of the Portuguese, see Fok 1978, 46–47, 50; citation from Pang Shangpeng 龐尚鵬, *Baiketing zhaigao* 百可亭摘稿 (1864), as quoted in Fok 1978, 77; cf. also Tang 1998, 14; John Wills's "Relations with Maritime Europeans, 1514–1662," in *CHOC*, 8.2, 333–75; and Jin and Wu 2007. For recent summaries on the Spanish plan to conquer China, see Ollé 2000, 98–110; Borao, ed., 2001; and Ollé 2002.

16. On the echo of the 1603 Manila massacre at the Ming court, see Ricci's letter to his confrere Ludovico Maselli in Rome, dated 1605, in Tacchi Venturi 1911–13, 2: 258–59: "I do not know if you received there news of what the Spaniards who live in Luzon or the Philippines have done. They killed more than twenty thousand merchants who had gone there to trade because of their preparations for some sort of treacherous action. It so happened that in this [Ming] court they spoke very much [of this matter], and we feared that this would be damaging to us, even if we always have paid attention to make sure we were not seen as their friends, even before this happened." On Chinese perceptions of the 1603 Manila massacre, see Borao 1998.

mately seizing Luzon from its former lord, who was an occasional tributary of China, and to have done so only for economic profit. The chapter also expresses outrage over the 1603 Manila massacre and reports attempts by local officials to persuade the central government to punish these barbaric Europeans.¹⁷

The ill repute of the Spaniards in Fujian was also accompanied by ideological elements that directly affected the Dominicans and the Catholic Church. Eyewitness accounts as well as wild rumors about the “Teachings of Dios” in the Philippines suggested to Chinese observers a close link between the Spaniards and the Spanish religious orders, which clearly had a prominent role in running the colony. The 1638 essay “Straight Words to Expel the Barbarians” (“Quyí zhiyan” 驅夷直言) by a Fujianese anti-Christian writer, the *jinshi* Huang Tingshi 黃廷師 of Quanzhou, contains a depiction of Christianity that is clearly based on information gathered by southern Fujianese sojourners in Manila’s “Chinatown,” the Parián, as well as on earlier Ming written accounts on the “Franks from Gansila” (千絲蠟, Castile). Huang Tingshi wrote that after using deceit to conquer Luzon at the beginning of the Jiajing period, the Spaniards employed the theories of the Lord of Heaven to confound the minds of the natives. Following a sketchy and imprecise summary of the main tenets of Catholicism, the text describes the religious organization of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Huang reported that five “offices” (*wu yuan* 五院) ran the lives of Catholic believers. This is a reference to the five major religious orders found in Manila (Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, and Recollects), whom Huang collectively called the *padres* (*bali* 巴禮). According to Huang, each of these offices had a different social role. For example, a person needing charity went to the Franciscans; someone who wanted to learn to write, to the Augustinians; and the parties to a conflict searching for a mediator, to the Jesuits. These roles probably reflected the experience of the Manila Chinese. The Dominicans (仙多羅明, *Xianduo Luoming*, i.e., Santo Domingo), who were in charge of the Chinese ministry and of establishing missions, receive the most unflattering characterization; they are the priests entrusted with “upholding

17. See excerpts on Luzon and maritime policy from several sources, including the *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, in *Zhongguo guji* 1980, 59–66. For an English translation of the *Ming History*’s “Chapter on Luzon,” see Felix 1966, 247–51.

the [Christian] heterodox theories and techniques and confounding [with their teachings those living in] neighboring countries.”¹⁸

Late Ming and early Qing sources suggest that Fujianese both in Manila and on the mainland were well aware of the friars’ role as the vanguard of the “spiritual conquest” of China. For example, the friars were instrumental in convincing the Spanish governors of the Philippines of the feasibility of occupying Taiwan and even supplied juridico-theological arguments for the island’s conquest. In 1619, on the way to a diplomatic mission to China, the Dominican Bartolomé Martínez (1584–1629) made contact with Taiwan’s aboriginal peoples and drew maps of the northern tip of the island with the help of Spanish pilots. After his return to Manila, he drafted an important memorial for the colonial administration, entitled “Advantages of Conquering Isla Hermosa” (the beautiful island), as Taiwan was then called by Iberians. The document makes no mention of Taiwan as a base to reach China for the sake of evangelization and instead highlights the economic and strategic advantages of the enterprise. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Dominican plan was to gain a foothold for evangelization of the continent.¹⁹

In a 1632 memorial “pertaining to the matter of Isla Hermosa,” the Dominican chronicler Diego Aduarte, then elevated to the bishopric of Nueva Segovia in the Philippines, unequivocally flaunted the spirit of “spiritual conquest” toward Taiwan and China that the order nourished in its members at the time:

As to . . . the spiritual end of the conquest [of Taiwan], this does not limit itself to the natives of this land but can be extended to the great Kingdom of China,

18. See *PXJ*, 3.29a. This negative image of the Dominican padres, in fact, only worsened with time, if we are to judge from the description of the arrival of one of them in 1666 in Taiwan, as contained in the collection of vernacular fiction *Unofficial History of Taiwan* (*Taiwan waizhi* 臺灣外志). The friar is received by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功’s son and successor Zheng Jing 鄭經, the warlord-pirate then occupying the island. Upon requesting permission to establish a church, the priest is rebuffed and sent home with these words: “Padres were originally called ‘those who transform others’ but they only use deceitful tricks and schemes to usurp another man’s country. On no account can they be allowed to establish their creed.” See a translation of this episode from the *Unofficial History of Taiwan* in Idema 1990, 476–77.

19. Spanish original and English translation of Martínez’s memorial in Borao, ed., 2001, 40–47; see *ibid.*, 48–51, for a related document intercepted and translated by the Dutch; cf. Borao 2004, 350.

so close that one can reach its shores in twenty-four hours by sea in fair weather. . . . It seems that when one speaks of conquering a city and toppling down its walls, one already sees oneself at the brink of battle, zealous to cover as much ground as possible. Similarly, in the spiritual conquest (*conquista espiritual*) of this powerful kingdom, God takes up the Gospel as the battering ram that gradually approaches and finally breaks those great walls of resistance. To think that this is to be achieved soon by way of the Portuguese in Macau is an obvious error that any sensible mind can perceive. But even if this may be so, that this may be a lost cause, it is necessary to attack the city from several fronts, since China has room enough for thousands of *conquistadores*.²⁰

The friars' rhetoric of spiritual conquest found realization in 1625, when Martínez was elected provincial of his order in Manila, a post he occupied until 1629. The "Christian ram" would finally start knocking down the Chinese walls. During his time as provincial, the Dominicans became actively involved at the highest level of government in establishing a fortress and missionary station in northern Taiwan, a task accomplished in 1626 (for the location of Spanish bases on Taiwan, see Map 1.2).²¹

The Fuan Christian literati who first met Angelo Cocchi in Fuzhou in 1632 must have been aware of the connection between the friars and the Spaniards. The connection certainly did not escape local authorities and possibly lineage leaders in Fuan:

[Cocchi's presence] seemed bad to some, especially to the main mandarin, who said that there were then some fathers from Macau *incognito* in his kingdom but that he pretended not to know it. However, it was not good that fathers from Luzon, as they call this island of Manila, went around in his kingdom, even if dressed as natives, because the Spaniards of Luzon were evil people and enemies of the Portuguese.²²

The Jesuit "Western literati" were an accepted part of the late Ming landscape. The friars, on the contrary, were newcomers with a heavy burden of negative associations, both as agents of Spanish expansionism and as carriers of "heterodox theories and techniques." Yet, the Fuan literati overlooked Cocchi's suspect provenance; as Christian believers,

20. Borao, ed., 2001, 192, with modifications.

21. On the election of Martínez, see Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 243; for a biography of Martínez, see Ocio and Neira 2000, 64–65.

22. Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 367. Riccio repeats the same information almost verbatim; see RH, f. 45v.

they saw him simply as a priest, similar to their previous spiritual mentors, the Jesuits. These neophytes even showed themselves ready to face official punishment for harboring the Spanish barbarian. They helped Cocchi escape from the ship that the governor had ordered him to board to return to Taiwan, and they harbored him in the Fuzhou house of a Fuan Christian physician. In that house Cocchi studied *guanhua* 官話, the official language of literate men, until his host suggested that he find a more suitable missionary territory, “where he was less known, and where his presence would yield more success.”²³ Fuan, the hometown of the men who were hiding the missionary, was the natural choice.

The Dominicans as Priests

From the perspective of local officials and Fujianese public opinion, a Spanish subject like Cocchi was either a warmongering barbarian pirate or a heterodox ringleader. Yet, Christian literati consciously defied their government, acted against prevailing views, and smuggled the Dominican to their native county. A strong religious conviction bordering on naïveté probably played a key role in the Christians’ decision. Fuan Christian literati found the kind of moral reform and the religious deliverance from sins and promise of salvation offered by the Jesuit “Celestial Teachings” attractive. Marginalized by geographical isolation and the relative cultural backwardness of their region, their religious longings and their ritual needs had been neglected by the few, overworked Jesuits then in Fujian. By adopting native garb and customs, the Dominicans appeared to engage in the same kind of reassuring cultural adaptation so typical of the Jesuits. While in Fuzhou between January and July 1632, Cocchi grew his beard and hair in the Ming fashion “as the Fathers of the Society of Jesus do,” studied *guanhua*, and learned some of the social “ceremonies” so important in literati circles.²⁴

But, as the experience of Guo Bangyong shows, exchanges with the Dominicans over the first few years revealed a religious sensibility differing in important ways from that of the Jesuits, and that difference eventually contributed to the creation of a unique Christian community in Fuan. The Dominicans may have been novices within the Chinese

23. Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 366.

24. Ibid.

empire, but in Manila they had already accumulated five decades of experience in ministering to Chinese immigrants, educating their souls in Christian doctrine, and healing their bodies in the hospital of San Gabriel. That experience and their own cultural and religious education in Spain and the Spanish colonies were important factors in shaping their work in China. A brief examination of both the history of the Dominican organization in the Philippines and the approaches the friars used in Manila's Chinatown illuminates some of the differences with Jesuit training, corporate structure, and methods, and what not only shocked but also intrigued the Fuan Christians and eventually influenced their perception and practice of Catholicism.

*The Dominican Province of
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary*

The Castilian fascination with China, the Cathay of Marco Polo that had sparked Columbus's imagination, played a propulsive role in pushing the borders of the Spanish empire to the western end of the Pacific, which the Spanish reached by the 1570s. Not long after the establishment of the colony of the Philippines, Spanish Augustinians, Franciscans, and the first bishop of Manila, the Dominican Domingo Salazar, busied themselves with plans for the conversion of the Middle Kingdom. All met with little success. The Portuguese patronage of the Jesuits and Chinese suspicion of foreigners defeated all attempts by the Manila clergy to reach the Chinese mainland. In 1587, two Dominicans who had previously worked in Central America as members of the Mexican province and who shared the "China fever" of their compatriots landed in the Philippines and established the new Province of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary (Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario).

Since its inception the province was a purely missionary organization and drew most of its members from other Dominican provinces in Spain and Mexico. The Province of the Holy Rosary had no priories in Europe, an indication of its total commitment to Asia. Headquartered in Manila, it possessed residences first in the Philippines and later in Taiwan, China, Japan, and Tonkin (northern Vietnam). For a long time, the only bases of the province outside Asia were liaison offices in Madrid and Rome; later the hospices of Cádiz (port of departure in

Spain) and of San Jacinto in México (Mexico City), were added as temporary stations for friars on their way to the Philippines.²⁵

The decentralized nature of governance in the Dominican order, organized around the autonomous election of a prior in each priory, was even stronger in the Province of the Holy Rosary, due to its distance from Europe. Unlike other provinces, it was organized not into “priors” but into “vicariates” (large territories) and “ministries” (special and smaller territories, like the Chinese Ministry in Binondoc, Manila). Each vicariate could contain more than one residence and was headed by a provincial vicar, named by the provincial council. The council, the highest collective organ, was constituted by the vicars in the region surrounding Manila, where the province’s headquarters were located. The executive chief was the provincial prior (simply called the “provincial”), elected by the provincial council for a tenure of four years on the recommendation of the Council of Definidores (Definitorio), a committee of the eldest and most authoritative friars in the central Dominican priory of Santo Domingo in Manila. Although the provincial prior had executive powers, he was limited in his actions both by the decisions of the provincial chapters (i.e., plenary legislative assemblies), held every four years, and by intermediate meetings called “intermediate congregations.” During the provincial chapters, all the representatives of the different vicariates and ministries who could travel to Manila met to discuss and approve new legislation for the province. In reality, most power was held by the members of the Definitorio and by the provincial prior, whom the Definitorio proposed for election and officially confirmed in his post in lieu of the master general of the order, who resided in Rome.²⁶

25. On the beginnings of the province, see D. González 1987; and González Pola 1997. On the Spanish search for Cathay-China, see Gutierrez 1985. On the hospice of Cádiz, see P. Fernández 1958, 120; on the Mexican hospice, see Medina 1997. Occasionally, members of provinces from countries other than Spain joined, as in the case of the Italian Dominicans Angelo Cocchi and Vittorio Ricci (Vittorio Riccio) in the seventeenth century, both of whom belonged to the Dominican Roman Province and hailed from the priory of Fiesole, outside Florence in Italy.

26. Information on the governance of the province and the China vicariate can be found in P. Fernández 1958, *passim*, and in GH, *passim*. The China Dominican mission was over time organized into a vicariate and headed by a provincial vicar (in Chinese *zhihui* 值會), nominated by the Manila provincial and confirmed by the provincial council. Because of distance, the China vicar had no say in the electoral process of the Manila provincial but exercised authority over all the Dominicans in

According to general Dominican practice, the members of the Province of the Holy Rosary lived in communities and, whenever possible, shared their daily religious routines and their meals. The rules of the province were particularly strict by the standard of discipline of the order in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, members had to sleep on wooden boards without padding and frequently engaged in physical penances, which included fasting and flogging. In addition to their normal schedule of study or ministry, they had to spend two hours in individual “mental prayer” every day and congregate with their brethren for communal prayer (choir) at set times, such as the midnight recitation of the matins (morning prayers). On Sundays and holidays, they attended mass and heard sermons, and during meals they listened to edifying readings. This was Guo Bangyong’s routine while residing in Bataán in the 1630s. In their missions and travels, often solitary, the daily individual reading of the breviary, containing the prayers of the priestly divine office, replaced the choral prayer. Reacting against a relaxation of discipline that suffused the order by the sixteenth century, the province’s rules intended to restore the strict standards imposed in medieval times by the order’s founder, St. Dominic Guzman (ca. 1170–1221). Since the fourteenth century, in almost all European provinces friars who wished to follow a more ascetic regime could join a special “reformed priory” of strict observance belonging to an interprovincial confederation of reformed priories. The Holy Rosary Province was inspired by that model.²⁷

In order to join the province, recruits petitioned the provincial general procurator, a friar stationed in Madrid and occasionally in Rome, who was charged with the development of the missions. The general procurator maintained liaisons with the Spanish royal court and the

China in matters of religious discipline that did not need superior approval. He could petition Manila for funding increases or purchase of properties (buildings or land) but did not determine how the funds coming from the Manila mother house were distributed to the missionaries. He partitioned the missionary territory into small areas and assigned the missionaries to these areas and had the authority to call special meetings (*juntas*) to discuss missionary policy. He also gave the needed *imprimatur* to books in Chinese published by the mission.

27. See CE, vol. 12, “Order of Preachers.” Discipline within the Province of the Holy Rosary became less stringent in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leading to many abuses, especially in the Mexican residence, where friars were reported gambling, drinking, and disrespecting the vicar; see P. Fernández 1958, *passim*; and Medina 1997, 116.

papal bureaucracy and managed financial and administrative matters. Since its inception, the province received royal funds to cover its operations and for some of the friars' travel expenses. This patronage subjected church activities to direct royal control with papal approval. Starting in 1649, however, after a drastic reduction of royal contributions, the province acquired several *haciendas* (mostly landed estates and plantations) in the Philippines and Mexico, which by the nineteenth century grew into very large landholdings.²⁸

Unlike the Jesuits, who joined a mission after some nine years of academic and spiritual training in their home countries, as well as in Rome, Goa, and Macau, the recruits of the Province of the Holy Rosary seldom spent many years in formal study prior to their missionary career. Students in the Dominican order were divided in two groups according to their academic attitudes, "formal" and "material." Only formal students could aspire to academic degrees, and they concentrated on the lengthy study of Thomistic theology and Biblical exegesis. The material students received only a basic training in humanities, philosophy, and dogmatic and moral theology in minor priory schools (*studia*), which was considered sufficient for preaching and missionary work. The education of the most advanced formal students, in contrast, occurred mainly within special colleges at the order's major priories in Europe. The earliest Dominican graduate colleges for theological and philosophical studies were established in Spain, and the most important was connected with the University of Salamanca. Located in Salamanca's Priory of San Esteban, the college, founded in 1299, became the premier center of learning for Dominicans in Europe in the sixteenth century, especially during the teaching tenure of the famous theologian and "founder of international law," Francisco de Vitoria (1486?–1546). In that century, other important colleges were opened in the Hispanic world: San Gregorio in Valladolid in 1501, San Tomás in Seville in 1515, and, overseas, on the island of Santo Domingo in 1538. Many more followed later on, in Spain and America. In 1611, the Province of the Holy Rosary and the Dominican archbishop Miguel de Benavides established the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario in

28. On the role of the procurator, see P. Fernández 1958, 46. The vicar of San Jacinto in Mexico also had an important financial and organizational role; see Medina 1997, 122. On the organization of the Spanish royal patronage of the missions, see Egaña 1958; on Dominican landholdings, see P. Fernández 1958, 172–73.

Manila for the training of young priests, which started conferring academic degrees in theology, philosophy, and arts in 1624 under the new name of Colegio de Santo Tomás. The pope elevated it to the rank of university in 1645, thereby opening its doors also to lay Spanish and *indio* students.²⁹

Most recruits of the Province of the Holy Rosary entered its priories in Spain as boys in their mid-teens and, after only a few years of study, were ordained and sent in large groups to Manila via Mexico. Some friars, however, joined the province after studying in the major “graduate colleges” of the order, often abandoning advanced teaching posts to join the mission. The academic titles awarded within the Dominican order in Spain, all obtained through examinations, were lecturer (*lector*), that is, instructor in the arts, philosophy, or theology in a priory or college; presented scholar (*presentado*), a title given to experienced lecturers; and master in sacred theology (*maestro en sagrada teología*), the ultimate academic title, obtained for teaching merits and research in philosophy and theology. Among the roughly sixty Dominicans who served in the China mission between the 1630s and the early 1800s, only fourteen attended a graduate college, mostly the College of San Gregorio in Valladolid, and some twenty attained the lowest degree of lecturer, both in colleges and priories. The rest received only a basic education.³⁰

29. On the Colegio de Santo Tomás in Manila, which, since its foundation, had chairs of grammar, rhetoric, arts, dogmatic theology, and moral theology, see P. Fernández 1958, 66; on Dominican colleges in general, see Hinnebusch 1985.

30. For data on the education of Dominicans, I tabulated the biographies of the China Dominicans in Ocio 1891 and 1895; on the organization of Dominican studies, see Hinnebusch 1985 and CE, vol. 12, “Order of Preachers.” A couple of examples will illustrate the educational background of Dominicans who reached the China mission. The Spanish Raymundo del Valle (1613–83) never attended a college, although he became lecturer in philosophy in the priories of Ronda (Málaga) and Granada. He left Spain at the relatively advanced age of 30, spent over ten years in pastoral work in the Philippines, including as vicar of the Chinese community of Manila, and then moved to China, where he died after almost three decades of missionary work. His training in philosophy and theology assisted him when, at the request of a Christian literatus in Zhejiang, he compiled an Aristotelian treatise in Chinese entitled *The True Meaning of Body and Soul* (*Xingshen shiyi* 形神實義) in 1677. The Italian Victorio Riccio, on the other hand, obtained a more advanced education before joining the Province of the Holy Rosary: after his preliminary studies during the 1630s in the Priory of St. Dominic at Fiesole, near Florence, in the Dominican Roman Province, he proceeded to St. Thomas College in the

After completing their education, the friars embarked on a long journey, hoping to fulfill the longing for adventure and desire for martyrdom that characterized most missionary novices in any Catholic order at the time. The trip from Spain to Mexico and the Philippines took almost a year and was arduous and included long treks in Mexico from the Atlantic port of Vera Cruz to Mexico City and then on to Acapulco on the Pacific Ocean. In almost all expeditions a number of novices died from illness. The 1632 mission, for example, lasted eleven months, including two months spent in Mexico waiting for the Manila galleon, and comprised 30 recruits, five of whom died in Acapulco and one on the Pacific journey. After their arrival in Manila, most Dominicans were assigned to missions in the Philippines, although a number found life in Mexico appealing enough to interrupt their trip and remain to work in New Spain.³¹

By the time a member of the Province of the Holy Rosary finally reached the China mission, he had experienced over a decade of life within the order, studying and exercising pastoral ministry in Spanish priories, during the long transoceanic journeys, and in the reformed houses of strict observance within the Province of the Holy Rosary in the Philippines. Only a few of the recruits who imagined reaching China ever made it there. Their numbers, decimated by disease during the journey to Asia, were further diminished by the demands of the Philippine mission, of other Asian missions, and by the linguistic and cultural difficulties encountered in the Manila Chinese community. Steeled for a life that was especially harsh in the early days of the province, only the most devoted, adaptable, and self-reliant were selected

important Minerva Priory of Rome, seat of the master general of the order, where he graduated as lecturer, and was named professor of philosophy in Fiesole. On del Valle, see Ocio 1891, 450–54; and GH, 1: 511–24, 5: 68–69; on Riccio, see José María González 1955; and Wills 1980.

31. On the 1632 journey, see letter of Juan García to the provincial, July 12, 1632, APSR, *China*, 7: 9–11. On the journey's routine, see Medina 1997. On Dominican evangelization in the seventeenth-century Philippines, see González Pola 1991; on the friars who remained in Mexico and on the Mexican hospice of San Jacinto, see Medina 1997. The desire for martyrdom in faraway lands was a feeling common among missionary recruits in all religious orders. Fruit of youthful enthusiasm and fueled by heroic reports from the missions, this desire eventually was tempered by the real experience in the field and by the limitations imposed on the new missionaries by their superiors; for a study about the psychology of Jesuit novices dreaming of a missionary career, see Roscioni 2001.

for the China mission. The experience that best prepared them to move on to the Chinese mainland was pastoral work among the Fujianese immigrants of Manila, a critical experience that taught them what might and might not be successful in their future evangelization efforts.

The Manila Experience

Dominican missionaries for the China mission were usually selected only after they had spent from one to several years in pastoral work in the Philippines, particularly in the Chinese ministry in Manila, either in the parishes of the Parián and later of Binondoc (the “Chinatowns” of Manila) or in the Chinese Hospital of San Gabriel. During their apprenticeship, the Dominicans had to study *chinceo*, the southern Fujianese Quanzhou dialect spoken by the Manila Chinese. Until the 1630s, the Chinese mission of Manila remained the only training ground for the China-bound friars, who learned firsthand there about Chinese people. Letters from colonial officials give an idea of the social composition and number of Chinese settlers (called *sangleyes* by the Spaniards) in Manila in the 1580s–1590s, among whom the Dominicans worked:

In this Parián there are ordinarily three to four thousand *sangleyes*, without counting the more than two thousand who come and go by boat. With these, and those residing in Tondo, and with the fishermen and vegetable gardeners who live in this region, according to the Fathers of St. Dominic who are in charge of them, there are possibly usually six to seven thousand *sangleyes*.

By the early seventeenth century, with further development of the galleon trade, almost twenty thousand Chinese came to live or sojourn in the Manila region. These men were merchants selling luxury goods imported from China (such as silk and porcelain) in exchange for the American silver brought by the Manila galleon coming from Acapulco; and artisans (bakers, butchers, weavers, tailors, shoemakers, hatmakers, carpenters), fishermen, and vegetable gardeners providing the city with food and all kinds of daily necessities. Most of these Chinese settlers were natives of the regions of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou in southern Fujian and spoke Minnan 閩南 dialects (see Map 1.2 for routes connecting southern Fujian to Manila). Until the arrival of the Dominicans, the Spanish clergy of Manila had, due to linguistic barriers, neglected the Chinese community. In Central and South America, in

the Philippines, and later in Taiwan, China, and other parts of East Asia, however, the Dominicans placed great importance on learning local languages, especially vernaculars. The Province of the Holy Rosary since its inception in 1587 showed a particularly strong commitment to the Chinese Ministry as a bridge to the continent. The Dominicans decided to build their first residence in the Philippines on land between the Parián and the city of Manila, close to the dwellings of the *sangleyes*, and, noticing the lack of medical facilities among them, they opened a small hospital to care for the sick. They also opened a school for the children of mixed marriages between Chinese men and *indio* women.³²

The first challenge was to learn Minnanese, and the first two friars assigned the task in the late 1580s were Miguel de Benavides (1550–1605) and Juan Cobo (1546–1592). The Dominicans' linguistic achievements among the Manila Chinese are reflected in a series of Chinese-language catechisms printed by Chinese Christian printers using the xylographic method in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the Parián. These early texts employed the southern Min vocabulary and pronunciation of the Manila Chinese, and in format they were influenced both by instructional materials on the basic contents of the faith known as *doctrinae*, composed by Dominicans in native languages in Mexico, and by the first Chinese catechism written in those same years by the Jesuit Ruggieri in Guangdong, the *True Record of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shilu* 天主實錄, 1584). The Manila texts' elements indicate a confluence of two different approaches to evangelization: on one hand, the experience of colonial Mexico and the Dominican tradition developed in Central America and by the theological school of Salamanca; and on the other hand, the approach of "accommodation" to Chinese culture adopted by the Jesuits in East Asia.

Juan Cobo arrived in Manila in 1588 among the first group of friars. He belonged to the pro-native wing of the Dominican order, which propounded the theories of Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) in defense of the rights of natives (*indios*). Once in

32. On the early phase (1587–1637) of the Dominican Chinese Ministry in Manila, see, e.g., Pe 1983; cf. also Wills 1994b. Quotation is from a letter of the Royal Audiencia of Manila to the king, June 13, 1589, as quoted in Medina 2004, 70–71. For a general description of socioeconomic life in the Chinese community of Manila and its population figures in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see Alva Rodríguez 1997, 55–72.

Manila, he convinced Bishop Salazar to defend the prerogatives of the church against the governor and the king and to approach the China mission in pacifist terms. Salazar, trained in Salamanca, had always been an advocate of native rights both in America and at the Spanish court but had been persuaded in the 1580s by the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Sánchez (1545–93) to support far-fetched plans to conquer China concocted by the colonial establishment. After the arrival of the Dominicans of the new province, however, Salazar returned to his earlier positions, and the governor of the Philippines observed, to his chagrin, that the newly arrived Dominicans “take the bishop wherever they want.” Cobo had been expelled from New Spain for preaching against the Viceroy Álvaro Manrique y Zuñiga, Marquis of Villamanrique (in office, 1585–90), who had blocked Dominican attempts to send missionaries to China. Villamanrique was also accused of oppressing the *indios* and was finally removed by the king in 1589 due to widespread local opposition. In Manila, Cobo attacked the rapacious farming of tributes among the natives by the granting of “trusteeships” (*encomiendas*) in the Spanish colonial labor system, joining the archbishop, the Augustinians, the Franciscans, and his Dominican confreres in a campaign against these malpractices, started during the governorships of Guido Lavezaris and Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa in the mid-1570s and early 1580s. The friar allegedly proclaimed from the pulpit that the Spanish king had “nothing to do [with the Philippines] and could not take tributes, because God had not entered Jerusalem demanding but rather giving tribute.”³³

Cobo and his confrere Miguel de Benavides were nevertheless most interested in the China mission and by order of their superiors busied themselves with the compilation of Chinese-language materials to distribute among the *sangleyes*. For their early converts, they compiled at least one *Christian Doctrine in the Chinese Language and Characters* (*Doctrina Christiana en lengua y letra china*, Manila, 1593), containing the basic articles of faith and prayers. Most of their contemporary works, however, were not meant for the initiated but for people unacquainted

33. Quotations in Medina 1990, 963; and Gutierrez 1985, 397, respectively. On the defense of native rights among the founders of the province, see Medina 1989. A large literature deals with the Spanish plan to conquer China, and with Alonso Sánchez and his rift with the Jesuit superiors in East Asia, New Spain, and Rome over his support of the plan; for a recent summary, see Ollé 2002.

with the doctrines of Christianity. They were thus based on reason and ordinary experience, without recourse to supernatural revelation. Known as *catechismi*, these books included Cobo's *Testimony of the True Religion* (*Bian zhengjiao zhenchuan shilu* 辯正教真傳實錄, Manila, 1593). This text adopted the same dialogic format between a Western scholar-priest and a Chinese scholar found in Ruggieri's *True Record of the Lord of Heaven*, a book that circulated in southern China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan and eventually reached the Philippines, where Cobo read it between 1588 and 1590. The greatest inspiration for this text and the later Dominican catechisms in Manila is to be found in the writings of the famous Spanish Dominican theologian and mystic Luis de Granada (1504–88). Cobo's *Testimony of the True Religion*, for example, was based on Granada's *Introduction to the Symbol of Faith* (*Introducción al simbolo de la fé*, Salamanca, 1583), a text in the tradition of natural theology, which used the description of “creatures” (including animals, plants, and humans) as proof of the existence of a creator god. Cobo's book included diagrams of the cosmos and of the planets, discussions of the sphericity of the earth, and pictures of the clever behavior of various animals, all presented to show the intelligent design of God in creating the universe. Similarly, two later Chinese-language works composed in Manila by Dominicans, the *Newly Printed Mirror of the True Teachings of Dios* (*Xinkan Liaoshi* [i.e., Dios] *zhengjiao bianlan* 新刊僚氏正教便覽, Binondoc, 1606) by Domingo de Nieva (1563–1606), and the *Newly Printed Record of the Investigation of Things and Exhaustive Examination of Principle* (*Xinkan gewu qiongli lu* 新刊格物窮理錄, Binondoc, 1607) by Tomás Mayor (?–1612?) were also adaptations of Granada's works. Granada's *Memorial of the Christian Life* (*Memorial de la vida cristiana*, Lisbon, 1565), a guide to devout life illustrating the rules for reaching moral perfection with discussions of confession, communion, mental and oral prayer, and a meditation on love inspired Nieva's work. Mayor's text was inspired by the *Introduction to the Symbol of Faith*.³⁴

34. On Ruggieri's *True Record of the Lord of Heaven* in Manila, see Cobo 1986, 73; cf. also Albert Chan 2002, 95; on the Mexican prototypes of the Philippine *doctrinae*, see Medina 1990; on the 1593 *Doctrina*, see Gayo and Doménguez 1951, Carlos Sanz 1958, Loon 1966–67, Yue 1999, and Chappell 2000; on Cobo's *Testimony of the True Religion*, see Cobo 1986 and Cervera 1997 and 2001. On Nieva's text, see Loon 1966–67, Fang Hao 1974b, and Albert Chan 2002, 226–29; on Mayor's text, see Loon 1966–67, Fang Hao 1974a, and Albert Chan 2002, 230–31; for biog-

The biographical details of the life of Cobo and an examination of the experience of this first generation of Dominicans reveal their shared goal of introducing all aspects of Catholicism to the Chinese immigrants of Manila, regardless of cultural difference, from the Aristotelian-Thomistic natural theology found in Granada's works to the doctrinal and ritual basics for converts. These friars, part of a reformist, rigorist movement within their order, were strongly influenced by the theological positions of the school of Salamanca and the conflict with secular authorities in the Americas over the protection of native rights. In their catechetical texts, the Dominicans of the Province of the Holy Rosary, a direct offshoot of the Mexican Province, adopted the format of post-conquest Latin American bilingual *doctrinae*. The *doctrinae*, written after acquiring linguistic proficiency in native tongues, critiqued the "superstitious" or otherwise "negative" elements of native cultures that were deemed incompatible with Christianity. In the Chinese *doctrina*, the friars targeted Buddhist and Daoist practices and beliefs.

Influenced by their reading of Ruggieri's catechism, their interaction with Chinese in Manila, and information gathered by Spaniards and Portuguese on China, the friars recognized the greatness of Chinese culture and letters in their Chinese texts and tried to depict the teachings of *Dios* as perfectly compatible with Chinese classical wisdom. For theological reasons, their texts contained some foreign flavor. Avoiding what they considered possible contaminations of Christian concepts with native concepts, the missionaries introduced Spanish phonetic equivalents in Minnanese pronunciation of words like *Dios* or *Jesus*, a practice they also followed in a Tagalog *doctrina* published according to the same format in Manila soon after the Chinese one. This translation practice had in fact been agreed on by all religious orders during the Synod of Manila of 1582–86.³⁵

If the Dominicans paid homage to Chinese culture by declaring themselves students of the Chinese classics in their Chinese catechisms, they expressed misgivings about the strategy followed by their fellow Europeans Ruggieri and Ricci, who targeted only Chinese elites and presented themselves as Western literati rather than priests. Cobo observed:

raphies of Nieva and Mayor, see Ocio 1891, 108–10 and 313–14, respectively. On Granada's *Memorial*, see Moore 1977, 83–89.

35. On the Tagalog *doctrina* and its vocabulary, see, e.g., Rafael 1988, 29.

Some think that the steps [the Jesuits Ruggieri and Ricci] have taken [in China] are not evangelical, since they go around *incognito* in [Chinese] dress among the Chinese, following human prudence to convert first the royalty and the rich, rather than the poor. [Ruggieri] does not dare to receive in the faith the common people for fear of being expelled from that land and that all be lost. But ultimately the good news of the Gospel has always been preached to the poor. And for this reason here [in Manila] there are many misgivings about [the Jesuit] way of proceeding.

Indeed, a recurring theme in Cobo's correspondence and in his Chinese texts is the prominence of the "poor" and "ignorant" in the mission and the equal standing of all men, as he wrote in his *Testimony of the True Religion*: "Never mind either the wisdom or stupidity of people; never mind the knowledge or ignorance of people; never mind the high or low, great or humble, position of people. You should hold all people as equal, without making distinction among them."³⁶

Yet, the humble status of their converts notwithstanding, the friars adopted the intellectual approach pioneered by Luis de Granada in Europe. Although Granada was worried about the diffusion of Protestant ideas in Spain among so-called Erasmians and "enlightened" thinkers (*alumbrados*), he was much more preoccupied with the ignorance of Catholics. His *Introduction to the Symbol of Faith* and *Memorial of the Christian Life* were highly didactic works aimed at guiding the moral and spiritual progress of the common Christian. The first book, in particular, also showed "concern for the conversion of people from other faiths and, by implication, the preservation of those born to Catholicism."³⁷ Published in 1583, the book's fresh content made it an apt candidate for translation and a useful tool in the conversion efforts directed at the Manila Chinese. Cobo described the *sangleyes* he met there around 1590 and praised their literacy and desire to learn:

The people who come here are the scum (*escoria*) of their land, people of the sea, fishermen, and workers who travel here to gain their food. The same kind of people in Castile would have their heads filled with cabbage and bacon. [Instead, these Chinese] are so sharp and able, that among a thousand of them there is none with whom we could not talk in rational terms not of fishing but rather of letters, of the movement of the skies, of moral matters, of manners,

36. Quotations are from a letter by Cobo in Remesal 1966, 409; and from Cobo 1986, 110–11, respectively.

37. Moore 1977, 145.

rituals, and justice. Because in matters of moral philosophy, although without being systematic, they are excellent.³⁸

It is no wonder that Cobo and his confreres decided to adapt the didactic yet relatively profound tracts by Granada for the *sangleyes*, especially because, in spite of their humble social background, many Manila Chinese were literate. Cobo observed that, although they were “the scum of the earth . . . in a thousand there will be ten who do not know quite a lot of characters, while in the villages of workers of Castile, out of a thousand there are hardly ten who know letters.”³⁹ We also learn from Cobo that there were some Chinese booksellers and bookbinders in Manila, and he used a number of books circulating in the Parián for his Chinese-language studies: dramas, featuring romantic and historical topics; historical digests; route books for merchants; geographical gazetteers; descriptions of foreign countries; and “*flores doctorum*” (collections of moral sayings). Cobo, in fact, even translated into Spanish one of these collections, entitled *Precious Mirror of the Clear Heart* (*Mingxin baojian* 明心寶鑒), a thirteenth-century popular neo-Confucian morality book. Benavides offered it in 1595 to the crown prince of Spain to show the results of the friars’ efforts in their ministry. The availability of this tract and other books in Manila illustrates the popularity of reading among the local Chinese as well as a wide range of interests, which included Dominican catechisms.⁴⁰

The time spent in the Chinese parishes of Manila gave the Dominicans a firsthand experience of Chinese customs and attitudes to life and religion, as well as a working knowledge of Minnanese dialects. More important, it gave them access to the network of people and commerce that flowed between Manila and Fujian (see Map 1.2). The open nature of this maritime flow convinced them that China would be receptive to missionary efforts, a conviction they also made from observing the relative success of the Jesuits in Guangdong and their own success in Manila. The supposed hostility of Chinese toward Spaniards and other evangelizers seemed, to the Dominicans in Manila, merely a specious

38. Letter by Cobo in Remesal 1966, 413–14.

39. Ibid., 413; on high literacy rates among Hokkien speakers, see Loon 1966–67, 13–16; on literacy in late imperial China, see Rawski 1979.

40. On Cobo’s Chinese books, see Remesal 1966, 411. A modern edition of Cobo’s translation, with the original manuscript in Spanish and Chinese, is Cobo 1959; for discussions of this text, see Knauth 1966; and Hing-ho Chan 2005.

motivation against engagement with Chinese culture by unsympathetic elements in the colonial establishment. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the friars invested much time and energy in their Manila Minnanese ministry in the hopes of reaching China through the regions of Quanzhou, Xiamen 廈門, and Zhangzhou, by distributing their Min-dialect *doctrinae* to returning merchants traveling back to their native land. We know, for example, that as late as 1683, copies of Tomás Mayor's *Record of the Investigation of Things and Exhaustive Examination of Principle* could still be found not only in Manila but also in Fujian and even in Japan.⁴¹

The high enthusiasm of this first generation of friars was dampened by several accidents. In 1590 Benavides and a confrere reached the region of Xiamen on the boat of two Chinese merchants of Manila who had converted. They were arrested as Spanish spies and expelled, and their Chinese pilots were severely punished. In 1592, Cobo, the best Dominican linguist of his generation, died in a shipwreck while returning from a diplomatic mission to the court of the Japanese shogun Toyotomi Hideyoshi, where he had been sent to avert an invasion of the Philippines. Subsequent attempts to launch a mission on the Chinese mainland, as we saw above, failed. Both the opposition of the Portuguese and the Jesuits in Macau and Chinese suspicions kept the Dominicans from making progress. These difficulties convinced the Dominicans that they needed to find another way to enter China, and so they supported the conquest of northern Taiwan.

The 1632 encounter of the first friar with converts from northern Fujian ultimately and fatefully steered the missionary vocation for China among the Dominicans of the Province of the Holy Rosary in a new direction. When they finally established themselves on the continent, the Dominicans discontinued the use of the Southern Min-dialect texts they had published in Manila and made no use of them in compiling their new catechetical Chinese writings. Rather, they adapted existing Jesuit materials in standard Mandarin Chinese (*guanhua*) and had them printed for use in Fuan. This practical decision indicates a change of target in the Dominican China apostolate. There were certainly objec-

41. On the diffusion of these texts in south China, see Loon 1966–67, 36, 40. On the three copies of Mayor's work gathered by the Jesuit Filippucci in the 1680s from Manila, Fujian, and Japan, see Filippucci 1683b, f. 319v. Today, two copies of this book are preserved in the Jesuit Archives in Rome; see Albert Chan 2002, 229–31.

tive factors behind this hiatus in textual transmission. The dialects of northeastern Fujian (known as Mindong or Funing dialects) were not intelligible to Minnan speakers, and vice versa. Moreover, the Jesuit creation of a unified Catholic terminology in Mandarin Chinese, approved by Rome, soon made the Minnanese texts obsolete and unorthodox. By the late seventeenth century, in fact, Nieva's and Mayor's early Min-language texts were suppressed by the Dominicans because of their linguistic errors and the tentative and confusing Catholic terminology they employed. This suppression must have also been enacted in reaction to the Jesuits' fierce criticism of these books, written, in the words of a Jesuit censor, in "very outlandish and vulgar Chinese language." But the main reason for the shift was the changed regional context and social target of the friars: no longer Minnanese-speaking merchants, but rather Mindong students trained in the examination curriculum and conversant with standard written classical Chinese.⁴²

In sum, the institutional and educational backgrounds of the Dominican missionaries who reached China exhibit fundamental differences with the Jesuits. The friars selected for missionary work who ministered in Fuan had, with few exceptions, received a rather narrow and abbreviated education focusing on Thomistic dogmatic and moral theology. They had not been extensively trained in scientific subjects, rhetoric, and philosophy, which were an integral part of the Jesuit curriculum. Thus, the Dominicans could offer little to Chinese literati in terms of "learned conversations." Many friars were in their mid-twenties when they reached the Philippines and while waiting to reach China were assigned to pastoral work or, more rarely, taught philosophy and theology to the Manila novices. The Jesuits, on the other hand, finished their lengthy and more varied studies in their late twenties and early thirties and usually did not start their missionary career in China until well into their thirties. The Dominicans' focus was almost entirely pastoral, including catechetical instruction and ministration of sacraments.

42. In the eighteenth century, Minnan *doctrinae* in romanization continued to be composed in manuscript form by Philippine missionaries for their own use, rather than being printed. This shows that oral instruction, and not written texts, became the backbone of pastoral work among the Manila Chinese. For an example of later Philippine Minnanese *doctrinae*, see a manuscript *doctrina* by the Jesuit Juan Astudillo, written in the Manila Chinese parish of Santa Cruz in 1716 (Astudillo 1716). On Dominican censures of the early Min texts, see Albert Chan 2002, 230–31; for Jesuit reactions, see Filippucci 1683b, f. 319v.

Moreover, their first experience of pastoral work before China was in either Mexico or the Philippines, that is, in colonial contexts where anti-idolatry campaigns against native religions were the dominant thrust of the missionary enterprise. Although they had a high regard for Chinese civilization and its imperial institutions, they also studied local dialects and gained a basic grasp of Chinese customs and religious traditions. Even if, like the Jesuits, they understood the impossibility of waging an all-out war against “idolatry” in China, the Dominican missionaries always remained concerned with maintaining ritual purity and patrolled their communities for “superstitious” activities.⁴³

The Dominican theological and pastoral vision ultimately translated into a conception of Christian life and of religious obligations more rigid than that entertained by the Jesuits. The Dominican path partly explains the trajectory of the Fuan mission in the Ming and Qing periods. Chapters 3 through 5 chart the history of the community and explore the interaction between Fuan Christians, their local culture, and the vision that the Dominicans tried to impose on them. As we will see, historical events shaped both the new religion and local social practices in unpredictable ways. Catholicism became a local religion, embedded in lineages and villages, sharing space with other religious traditions, while maintaining its connections to maritime Asia and beyond.

43. Data on age are based on my tabulation of the biographies, in Ocio 1891 and 1895, of around sixty European Dominicans who worked in China between 1632 and the early 1800s.

T W O

Becoming Local: Conflict with Gods and Ancestors, 1634–1645

In 1644, a crowd of onlookers thronged the main streets of Fuan for an unusual spectacle. A farcical masquerade of over three hundred men dressed in Christian costumes, some posing as women, snaked its way around the town's alleys. Members of the Chen lineage of Shanghang 上杭 ward had organized the bizarre parade to ridicule the town's Christians and the Dominican missionaries in a form of festive mockery and gender inversion common in local popular religious festivals. A man dressed as Christ led the cortège, shouting: "I am the god of the Christians, who came to the world for them!" A vast procession followed, brandishing crosses and rosaries and mumbling the Hail Mary, memorized for the occasion. Immediately after them came three men on horses, caricatures of the friars stationed in Fuan at the time, Juan García, Francisco Díez, and Francisco Capillas. They wore "hideous masks, with noses one palm's-length long," a reference to their large European noses but possibly also a coded allusion to sexual attributes. Each carried a copy of the catechism recently printed by García in Fuan and proclaimed in a loud voice to the bystanders: "I am Father So-and-So; and, as I teach in this book, I preach and advise you to do evil by following this Law. But to be a follower, you must be baptized!" Then, the

three grotesque foreigners dismounted and alternated in taking off their masks to address the public. A character dressed as a woman hastened to beg for baptism, and one of the friars, mocking the ritual, “started to undress her, touch her breasts, and do other lascivious actions while she was sitting on his knees.” A feigned *beata* “with an enormous abdomen, as if pregnant” followed and addressed another Father: “I wish to retain my virginity; but what will I do with this big pregnancy?” The fake Father groped her and answered: “Yes, my daughter, you can keep your virginity and not be bothered by your belly, whatever it is, since what you have there has been conceived by the workings of the Holy Spirit!” The sketch ended with the arrival of a third actor posing as a delicate and beautiful girl: “Father, can I get married, since many desire me as a wife?” “Don’t!”—said the priest—“You will become a *beata* and will be mine, and nobody else’s. I came all the way from faraway Europe only for you, daring so many dangers and seas!” Then the friar embraced her and engaged in “other amorous and obscene actions.” Among the people targeted for ridicule were converted women, the most important Christian literati, and some beggars, all wearing boards with their names. The converted literati were accused of having pooled their resources to feed the foreigners, the beggars and widows of following the friars in exchange for material support, and the converted young girls of engaging in lascivious behavior with the three long-nosed foreigners and becoming pregnant by them. “Important people” applauded the scene from the sides of the street. The masquerade ended when a young Christian woman of low status faced one of the masked men, grabbed the cross he was holding in his hand, and escaped so quickly with it that the mob could not pursue her. The ensuing commotion confounded the order of the parade, which soon disbanded.¹

These scenes of young female converts engaged in explicitly sexual behavior with the missionaries occupied the center stage in the public eye and revealed the local elite’s preoccupation with suspected liaisons between the foreigners and local women. But this was only one of the causes of conflict in the first decade of the Christian presence in Fuan. Through their iconoclastic attitude to local gods and their prohibitions

1. This episode is recounted in RH, ff. 175v–76v; all quotations are from those folios; cf. also GH, 1: 193–94. On the different dances and *saihui* 賽會 processions in Mindong that may have inspired this “procession,” see Liang Yizhang et al. 1992, 77–92.

of ancestral rituals, which were at variance with previous Jesuit practice, the Dominicans challenged cherished beliefs in Fuan, and violent clashes ensued. These conflicts could have quickly ended the Dominican presence in Fuan and led local converts to revert to the type of Christian life introduced by the Jesuits that accommodated local customs. Instead, the tensions among Christians, local gentry, and officials initiated a transformation of Catholicism, turning it into a new local religion in Fuan. Anti-Christian riots, public burlesques, and discussions about the nature of ancestral rituals radicalized a small group of Fuan Christians and initiated a struggle by individual converts and their families to obtain community acceptance for Christian practices and values in local life, a process that continued into the eighteenth century.

This chapter focuses on conflict during the early period of contact, from 1634 to 1645, the year when the Ming-Qing wars began to affect the power dynamics of coastal southern China in ways favorable to Christianity. As noted above, a handful of converted literati in the late Ming period were the first to introduce the new faith in Fuan. In line with the Jesuit position, they saw most Chinese family rituals as compatible with Christianity, an interpretation, however, that was soon criticized by the Dominican friars, who championed a fundamentalist brand of Christianity that firmly rejected idolatry and ancestral rituals. This development had consequences both inside and outside the community. Christian literati split into two groups, those who preferred Jesuit-style accommodation, and those who gradually became convinced by the Spanish friars' approach. Concurrently, the prohibitions enforced by the friars provoked a backlash from local society. Soon, gentry and lineages organized mob actions against Catholics, added anti-Christian rules to their genealogies, and urged the local government to suppress the new religion, actions that climaxed in an anti-Christian campaign organized by the provincial government in 1637–38. The suppression resulted in a deepened commitment on the part of a few dedicated converts, led by Guo Bangyong, and a new emphasis in the missionaries' evangelizing efforts on commoners, rather than on the literati alone. These developments created a hardcore nucleus of followers, who gradually expanded the missionaries' influence into the "inner chambers," where women lived. Local gentry and lineages perceived this intrusion into the female sphere as yet another frontal attack on the patriarchal social order and reacted accordingly, accusing

missionaries of predatory sexual behavior and Christians of a lack of filiality. The penetration of Christian values and practices into the life of Fuan had begun.

First Tensions

Trouble started soon after Angelo Cocchi was joined in Fuan in 1633 by two Spanish friars: his confrere Juan Bautista de Morales (1597–1664), who had previously worked in the Chinese community of Manila; and Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero (1602–69), the first Franciscan member of the Fujian mission. This alliance between the two mendicant orders was not unusual: since medieval times, the sons of St. Dominic and St. Francis had felt a singular affinity, especially in mission territories. They thus occasionally helped one another, as in 1587 when the Manila Franciscans, already established in the Philippines, had given initial hospitality to the founders of the Province of the Holy Rosary. Morales and Caballero first arrived at the Spanish garrison and mission in northern Taiwan in April 1633. Soon some Christians from Fuan, led by the son of Guo Bangyong, Juan Guo Zuobin 郭作彬, visited them. Juan Guo introduced them to “the language, the ceremonies, the clothing and the food, all things that at the beginning are rather hard to learn for Europeans.” In June, Guo Bangyong himself, accompanied by three other Fuan converts, arrived at the garrison and sailed back to the continent with the new arrivals. Once again, we see local Christians acting as the main conduits for the missionaries: without the Chinese Christians’ help, their efforts to teach the language and customs to the newly arrived priests, and their organization of transportation and support, the missionaries would in all likelihood have been unable to reach Fuan. Kinship networks in Fuan figured prominently in the establishment of the Christian community and in the protection of the missionaries. Guo Bangyong, in particular, played a crucial role in easing the way for the missionaries by sending his own son to Taiwan. As Chapter 5 shows, the embedding of Christianity within local families turned out to be the key factor in the diffusion and resilience of the community.²

2. Quotation from RH, f. 49v; the entire episode is recounted in RH, f. 49v. For biographical information on Morales, see Ocio 1891, 1: 358–69, and 1895, 116–17; GH, 1: 381–94; and DMB, 1073–76; on Caballero, see SF, 2: 317–32; and DMB, 24–31. The identification of Guo Bangyong’s son, a stipend student arrested in the

Once the party reached Fuan, Cocchi, following the example of Jesus, performed the ceremony of the washing and kissing of the feet of his two newly arrived companions. The Christians present at the scene were “surprised at seeing such an unusual action.” These literati were used to treating the Catholic priests they had met as masters in the Confucian tradition, to whom they bowed and even kowtowed. The evangelical foot-washing of the friars must have looked extremely humiliating to them. Soon they would realize that these priests were of a different brand than the Jesuits they had met in the provincial capital.³

Cocchi died in Fuan on November 18, 1633, having spent around fifteen months in his new mission, and Morales and Caballero were left alone to study Mandarin and the local dialect. The umbilical cord that linked local Christian literati to their Jesuit masters in Fuzhou, however, had not been severed. While visiting Fuzhou, some of the Fuan converts reported the actions of the friars to Aleni, revealing their discontent about the newly arrived priests. The Fuan converts told Aleni that “since [the friars] were new to the kingdom in language and in the knowledge of characters and of their courtesies (*cortesias*), they were rather faulty in the courteous manners, since they were not knowledgeable about them.” In response, Aleni “exhorted [the converts] to convince [the friars] to retreat to some isolated place, where they could learn the writing, the language, and the courtesies according to the ways of this empire, and that afterward they could go out freely to preach and propagate the Catholic faith.” The friars reacted with disdain to Aleni’s advice, much to the surprise of the Fuan converts, who venerated him as their master. The men, thus, “little by little grew colder to the [friars] . . . and thought they were strange.” This was the beginning of the split in the group of Fuan converts between those who preferred the accommodationist approach of Aleni and those who gradually became convinced of the orthodoxy of the Spanish friars’ approach.⁴

In the first three years of the Dominican presence (1633–35), the newly arrived friars continued to practice a missionary method that indeed departed from that used by Aleni. Although there was no difference

wake of the 1637–38 anti-Christian campaign, is based on genealogical materials; see Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 132, and 2009, 189.

3. Quotation from RH, f. 50r.

4. Quotations from RH, ff. 50v–51r.

between the doctrines and the rituals presented by the Dominicans and those of the Jesuits, the friars differed in the degree of accommodation to Chinese cultural norms and practices. For instance, the friars interpreted Chinese family rituals as objectionable for Christians and adhered strictly and very literally to the so-called positive law of the church, including obligations in matters of fasting, celebration of festivals, and moneylending. Willing to come to term with Chinese “courtesies,” the friars nevertheless found the attitude of the Jesuits toward ancestral reverence too tolerant and deemed unacceptable the deferring to a hazy future of Christian obligations such as fasting on all commanded feasts or the modification of Catholic ritual practices like the unction of the loins and feet at baptism. In their sermons, they extolled the uniqueness of the Christian God and condemned idol worship, be it of popular gods or Buddhist icons. Moreover, they undertook investigations into the meaning of the ancestral rituals permitted by the Jesuits and subsequently condemned such rituals as incompatible with Christianity. Although many of the converted literati became hostile to the friars, others, clustered around two main surnames—the Huang family of Dingtou 頂頭, a village located along the Baima 白馬 harbor, and the Guo family of Guanpu 官埔, a small suburb just outside the city walls of Fuan—accepted the more rigid interpretation of Christianity offered by the new priests. At the same time, attacks against the symbols of gods and ancestors provoked a spirited reaction from the local gentry and lineage organizations, proof that Christianity was beginning to antagonize local power structures on central issues.

Christian Iconoclasm Against the Gods and the Reaction of Local Society

Christian iconoclasm targeting the images of Chinese gods ignited the first wave of opposition in Fuan against the new ideas and practices of the friars. In the mid-1630s, residents twice unsuccessfully petitioned the local magistrates to destroy the Christian chapel built in Dingtou by the converted members of the Huang family and to use its building materials for public works or a new Confucian school. The specific reasons for those petitions are unclear, but an incident in late 1634 gives a clue. On Christmas Eve, 1634, the Dominican Francisco Díez (1606–46), who had recently joined the mission, and his confrere Morales went to Fuan to celebrate Christmas with the local Christians, who convened in

the chapel built by Guo Bangyong's family. Among the worshippers were sixteen local literati. While Díez was administering sacramental confession to them, Morales received the visit of the "mandarin of the literati," that is, the instructor of the Confucian school (*xueguan* 學官), who had already visited them numerous times. A large group of people suddenly entered the building. They knelt in front of the official, and a licentiate (*shengyuan* 生員), who led the group, presented the clay head of a religious image to him. Then he accused one of the Christian converts of entering his house and chopping off the head of one of the statues set on the family altar and saying that it had no divine power and that it was only a vile piece of clay. Quite likely, this action had been inspired by the friars' sermons, in which they labeled all Chinese gods as personifications of Satan. The crowd demanded the Christian be punished. The official appeased them and they left, but he also told Morales that he should strictly forbid these iconoclastic actions to avoid retribution against Christian images. An hour later, a crowd returned to the church with a document from local authorities ordering the arrest of the culprit. People entered the church, seized the man, and brought him to the assistant magistrate, who sentenced him to a caning, a fine, and public exposure in the cangue. Later, the crowd returned to the church, which had been adorned for the Christmas festivities, and despite some resistance destroyed the altar and the canopy. The Christian literati then appealed to the instructor of the Confucian school, asking him to intercede with the assistant magistrate, so that they could celebrate Christmas. Things calmed down after his intervention. But eight nights later, locals gathered in a procession with drums and copper cymbals and went into a temple near the chapel. The Christians immediately advised the missionaries to leave for Dingtou, so that the "fire would subside" in Fuan. The crowd proceeded from the temple to the chapel, attacked it, and started demolishing it. The building partly collapsed on the attackers, killed one of them, and seriously injured others. The assistant magistrate rushed in his sedan chair with his runners to the site but had to retreat after his cap was knocked off by a stone hurled in the riot. After a few days, the county magistrate, Wu Sanzhu 巫三祝, returned to Fuan. Wu was concurrently subprefect of Funing and often had to be away on inspection tours of his vast territory. After learning the facts, including the mob's assault on his assistant, he arrested and punished a number of the individuals involved. Following new requests from the townspeople, he also decreed the banishment against the

missionaries. But Wu's expulsion orders and injunctions to turn the chapel of Dingtou into a Confucian school were ignored.⁵

In this first confrontation, we can identify two major anti-Christian fronts: local crowds led by the gentry, and county officials. The locals, commoners and gentry alike, perceived the Christian god as an intruder into the familiar supernatural landscape. Following an attack on the gods by an overzealous Christian, the residents immediately appealed to the earthly authorities and asked for justice. That was not enough. After a week, villagers organized a procession and proceeded to a local temple near the Christian chapel, where they presumably prayed to the offended god. Then they physically attacked the Christian hall. These acts became both a ritual and a military action. Regional gods as well as the tutelary spirits of local lineages were territorial in nature, and the borders of their area of influence were physically marked by popular processions, not unlike those of Catholic saints in Europe. Once the territorial borders of the Chinese gods were violated by the presence of a jealous deity like the Christian Lord of Heaven, confrontation was unavoidable. The Christian sources, in fact, saw the incident as a divine confrontation: the crowd was moved by the devil, and the destruction of the church demonstrated the Christian god's engagement in the battle, bringing immediate punishment to the destroyers, who were killed and injured in the process.⁶

5. My account of this episode is mainly based on RH, ff. 77r–77v; Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 490–92; a Chinese-language memorial by the Chen lineage, 1645?, in Morales et al. 1650, f. 403v; and a Spanish translation of a lost Chinese letter by Juan Miao Shixiang, in Caballero 1635–36, f. 20v; cf. also GH, 1: 90n13. The text of Wu Sanzhu's anti-Christian decree in Spanish version can be found in GH, 1: 92–93, original in RH, ff. 78r–79v. The instructor of the local Confucian school in 1634 was the *juren* Qiu Wenli 邱問禮; see FAXZ, 255. County magistrate Wu Sanzhu was a native of Longchuan 龍川 county in Guangdong. According to the *Gazetteer of Longchuan County* (*Longchuan xianzhi* 龍川縣誌 1981, 36.7b), Wu served in Fuan for six years, from 1631 to 1637 and was so beloved that people built a shrine to him. He authored some collected works, edited a local gazetteer, and wrote numerous works on astronomy and geography. On Wu, see also GH, 1: 92–93; RH, f. 79v; and FAXZ, 300.

6. A similar episode of confrontation with the local Earth God occurred in Luoyuan in the 1670s, as testified by the Dominican Francisco Varo; see my treatment of this episode in Menegon 2005a, 202–5. For general considerations of clashes between Chinese gods and the Christian Lord of Heaven, see Zhao Shiyl 2002, 145–61.

The local gentry also used books to fight the Christian intrusion. Shortly after the 1634 incident, the literatus Chen Hanxun 陳翰迅, a member of the prominent Chen lineage in the ward of Shanghang, within the walled town of Fuan, published a pamphlet against the Christians. He observed that the Christian god was none other than the supreme deity of the Classics, Shangdi 上帝. He derided the notion of the incarnation of Christ, a number of facts of Jesus's life, and the virginity of Mary. He also attacked the missionaries for their opposition to Chinese rituals, singling out Catholic rites like baptism and confession as particularly repulsive. Thereafter, another local literatus had an anti-Christian tract printed in Fuan. In both cases, soon after publication, the friars confronted the authors and engaged in public debate with them.⁷

Government officials constituted the second locus of anti-Christian activities. They became involved only after locals started protesting Christian iconoclasm, and they limited themselves to curbing the Christian nuisance by punishing the culprits involved in the attack and enforcing ideological conformity to the precepts of the Confucian order. They ordered the missionaries to leave town, and commanded villagers to use the church in Dingtou as a Confucian school. There locals were to read, besides the Classics, the dynastic instructions on proper social relations issued by the first Ming emperor and the village compact. Officials, however, did not directly interfere with the worship of local gods; rather, they enforced state orthodoxy, an action they took after prompting by the local gentry and mob pressure. Their halfhearted measures were ultimately ineffectual. Magistrate Wu Sanzhu may have been lackadaisical in his response not only because of an overload of administrative work but also because of his friendship with the Jesuit Aleni. Contemporary sources cited their good relations, and his personal interest in the study of geography and astronomy, disciplines on which Aleni and his confreres had famously published, suggests an attraction to Western scientific knowledge.⁸

7. On these opponents, see Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 502–3; RH, f. 80v–81r; and GH, 1: 96, quoting Varo, “Manifiesto y declaracion” (1671). Caballero may have written an apologetic tract against the theses of Chen, entitled “Apologia pro fide Christiana contra Doctorem Chin-Han-Sin”; see SF, 2: 344.

8. Since its foundation, the Ming state had regulated religious activities through legal statutes and promoted the reform and standardization of local shrines into an approved empire-wide hierarchy. However, local magistrates usually refrained from

In the 1630s, local officials like Wu, agents of a weakening Ming state besieged by enemies outside and within, were trying to assert local control over banditry and heterodox groups, including Christianity in Fuan. But local elites were the true masters of the land and exerted great influence on religious life and institutions. In Fuan, episodes like the one just described became increasingly common during the 1630s and 1640s, with gentry and lineage leaders taking matters into their own hands and attempting to control the activities of local Christians. But before we examine these shifts and their significance for the localization of Christianity in Fuan, we should pause to explore the religious context within which this phase of conflict unfolded. It is within local religious traditions that Christians found spaces of compatibility to develop the new values and practices imported by the missionaries.

*The Religious World of Fuan: A Competitive
Market of Gods, Spirits, and Rituals*

Conflicts between Christian students in Fuan's Confucian school and other members of the local gentry, as well as pre-existing family allegiances, no doubt played a role in the 1634 disturbances. This episode, however, also gives us a glimpse of the complex web of religious organizations, including lineage and other cultic networks of local gods, within which the Christian community of Fuan grew. The Dominican priests and the Christian literati who supported them had to compete with other religious traditions in a "religious market," while contending with the gentry, who acted as protectors of local religion and supporters of lineage cults.

An examination of the religious traditions of northeastern Fujian reveals the intricate fabric that missionaries and Christians faced. Broadly speaking, worship in northeastern Fujian, as elsewhere in China, was directed toward several interlocking realms of divine beings. Gods of the house, such as the Stove God and other popular gods, were worshipped at

direct intervention in local ritual life, leaving to the gentry and local religious leaders the task of monitoring approved cults, and limiting themselves to intervention in cases that clearly endangered local order and promoted heterodox values. For a reference to the connection between Aleni and a "Superior Judge" identifiable as Wu, see Caballero 1635–36, f. 20v; for Wu's interest in astronomy and geography, see *Longchuan xianzhi* 1981, 36.7b.

home at special times, as in the case of the Spirit of Wealth during the New Year's festival. Major local gods, officially recognized by the state, enjoyed great popularity in Fujian. The goddess of sailors, Mazu 媽祖, also known as the Heavenly Empress (Tianhou 天后), and the Lady of the Water Margins (Linshui furen), for example, had thick networks of temples in the province. In contrast, tutelary divinities of local lineages and other unofficial minor gods of local import received the respect of people in a county or a cluster of villages only. Here I concentrate on the major traditions of Daoism and Buddhism and on local cults in Fuan, including in particular those of Linshui furen and the tutelary gods of prominent lineages. In order to survive and flourish within this religious environment, Catholic priests had to attract and keep the attention of local people.

Daoism and Buddhism

The “Great Traditions” of Daoism and Buddhism co-existed and interacted with a plethora of local cults and family rites animating the life of Fujianese communities. The rituals offered by Daoist priests and Buddhist monks, including the performance of funerary rituals, cosmic dances, and exorcisms, fulfilled the daily needs of people to cast out evil spirits and illnesses and bring harmony to villages and individuals. Several of these ritual solutions were also offered in the Catholic religious repertoire. Missionaries mentioned both *tao-su* (*daoshi* 道士, Daoist masters) and “bonzes” as their antagonists, although Buddhist monks seem to have been more formidable foes, thanks to their institutional strength and ability to mount concerted campaigns against Christianity. This disparity in the corporate organizational capabilities of the two traditions, as perceived by missionaries, is confirmed by Chinese sources. By the late Ming, organized Daoism had but a small presence in Fuan. The last mention of a notable Daoist priest in the local gazetteer dates to the Zhengde period (1506–21). Zhang Jingzhen 張景真, a native of Daliu 大留 village and head of the Daoist Registry (Daohuisi 道會司) of Fuan, traveled to Beijing to receive ordination, probably in the Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity) tradition, privileged by the Ming founder, and eventually established a temple in Fuan. The late Qing local gazetteer recorded four Daoist temples in Fuan. The most important was the Zhenqing guan 真慶觀 (established in 1248), seat of the county Daoist Registry, where apprentices could learn Daoist techniques in the

tradition of Zhang Jingzhen, by then called the “patriarch” (*zu fashi* 祖法師) of the local school. Yet, even if limited by institutional boundaries, Daoist priests in Fujian, together with other ritual experts using Daoist liturgies, were often called to perform their liturgies in the context of local cults, such as the worship of Lin gong da wang 林公大王, a god popular in the territories of Ningde, Zhouning 周寧, and Fuan counties. As Kenneth Dean has shown, Daoist rites have framed the liturgical structure of Fujianese gods’ festivals since the Five Dynasties, and thus Daoist priests and mediums loosely affiliated to Daoism remained ubiquitous in village life.⁹

Buddhism had a more visible institutional presence in northeastern Fujian, with scores of temples and some large monasteries established as early as the Tang dynasty. By the Ming, however, many Fujianese temples were no longer as rich as they had been under previous dynasties. Heavy taxation of temple lands had diminished the number of monks, and subsequently local gentry had been able to prey on the estates of the temples through mortgaging of their lands, and commoners were even living in monasteries. In northeastern Fujian, the *wokou* devastation also took a toll: the famous temple of Jianshan 建善 in Xiapu county (Funing subprefecture, north of Fuan), for example, was burnt down by pirates in 1559.¹⁰

Nevertheless, by 1638, there were 73 temples small and large throughout Fuan county, a remarkable recovery from the ravages of the previous century. In all likelihood, these temples depended on an intimate and symbiotic relationship with local gentry and sympathetic officials, who, besides deriving income from the monastic lands, also usually offered some patronage to monks and engaged in meritorious acts, such as the printing of scriptures. During the Wanli reign, for example, Fuan County Magistrate Mao Wanhui 毛萬彙 (tenure in 1610–15) had complained about the alliance between “treacherous monks” (*jian seng*

9. There are still no studies on the cult of Lin gong da wang, who is briefly mentioned in Zhang Xianqing 2003b, 79–80. The complex and sometimes antagonistic symbiotic relationship of Daoism and Buddhism with “popular religion” is explored in Lagerwey 1999. On Daoism in Fuan during the Ming, see FAXZ, 558; and *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 1033; during the Qing, see FAXZ, 590. Cf. Kohn 2000, chapter by Pierre-Henry de Bruyn, “Daoism in the Ming,” 594–622. On Daoist liturgical frameworks in Fujian, see Dean 1993.

10. See *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 1039; T’ien 1990, *passim*; and Wang Rongguo 1997, 482.

奸僧) and “powerful bullies” (*shihao* 勢豪) in monopolizing monastic lands. In Mao’s view, this meant that good clerics, the government, and the local population were being deprived of needed resources, and he attempted to curb the illegal rental of monastic estates, which he estimated accounted for around 10 percent of all the scarce local arable land. These measures might have in fact been an attack on the local gentry for its excessive closeness and economic complicity with the Buddhist clergy, in itself an indication of elite support for local temples. This support, moreover, was also offered by pious officials. Mao’s predecessor as Fuan county magistrate, He Xueyi 賀學易, for instance, during his tenure in 1608–9 had sponsored the printing of a sutra, which he commissioned to be carved in the important monastic center of Hangzhou. Additionally, selected monasteries in the region intermittently received the patronage of the Ming imperial family. For example, the famous Zhiti 支提 Monastery, located on a famous mountain in Ningde county south of Fuan and eventually affiliated with the Linji 臨濟 Chan school, was lavishly reconstructed starting in 1573 on the intervention of the devout Empress Dowager Cisheng 慈聖. By imperial order, a copy of the newly reprinted edition of the Tripitaka was donated to the monastery’s library, where it is still preserved.¹¹

Direct doctrinal confrontation between Buddhist monks and friars does not seem to have occurred in Mindong, although Dominican catechisms never failed to attack common Buddhist ideas and practices, from reincarnation to vegetarianism. The temples in marginal rural counties like Fuan were of local importance and of a lesser intellectual standing than major provincial monastic centers of learning patronized by the high gentry and the imperial house. This might have translated into a lack of interest among local Buddhists in any doctrinal engagement with the Catholic missionaries. In any case, the Dominican friars would have not been capable of engaging in meaningful debates with Buddhist

11. For examples of monastic revival in Jiangnan and Fujian in the aftermath of the *wokou* destruction, see Brook 1993, 257; and J. Wu 2006 and 2008, 87. On the Zhiti Temple, see Cui 1988, 6–7; and Wang Rongguo 1997, 482–85. On Mao Wenhui’s regulation of monastic lands in Fuan, see Mao post-1615, “Eight Items on Temple Land Rents,” 20a–27b. A copy of He Xueyi’s sutra (entitled *Za’ahan jing* 雜阿含經) published in 1609 is kept in the Rare Books Collection of the National Library in Taipei; on He Xueyi’s tenure in Fuan, see FAXZ, 250. On the consequences of the Qing coastal evacuation for Fujianese Buddhism, see Wang Rongguo 1997, 298–99.

clerics. Other areas of Fujian, however, saw intense competition and clashes between Jesuit missionaries, on one hand, and monks and laity connected to the rising Linji lineage of Chan Buddhism, on the other. In particular, the prominent late Ming monks Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1566–1642), based in the Tiantong 天童 Monastery of Ningbo, Zhejiang, and Feiyin Tongrong 費隱通容 (1593–1661), based in the Huangbo 黃檗 Monastery near his native Fuqing, participated in an anti-Christian diatribe that swept Fujian in the mid-1630s. These famous masters wrote essays criticizing Christian doctrines in response to requests by laymen in Zhangzhou (Minnan) and Jianning 建寧 (north-western Fujian) worried about the activities of the Jesuits there. The campaign's writings collected in the famous *Collection to Refute Heterodoxy of Our Holy Dynasty* (*Shengchao po xie ji* 聖朝破邪集, 1639) also included key official documents on the deviant Catholic practices of Fuan, proof of Buddhist awareness of the friars' community and its ways.¹²

The wars of the dynastic transition brought major destruction to Buddhist establishments, and the 1650s coastal evacuation of southern China ordered by the Qing authorities to defeat resistance to their rule wiped out many of the temples located in the zone of interdiction. Following the restoration of peace, however, the Manchu relaxation of Ming monastic regulations revitalized Buddhist life, and during the High Qing (1760s) the number of Buddhist temples in Fuan climbed to a total of 83, with about 400 monks and nuns.¹³

The important monastic intellectual centers in Fujian, including those in northeastern Fujian, might have influenced literati and gentry

12. On Buddhist reformist monks in Zhejiang and Fujian (who belonged to both the Caodong 曹洞 and the Linji lineages at different stages in their careers), see K. Ch'en 1964, 359; Wang Rongguo 1997, 305–13; and J. Wu 2006 and 2008 (biography of Miyun Yuanwu, 86–88; biography of Feiyin Tongrong, 92–93). On Buddhist-Jesuit controversies, see Kern 1992, 93, 141; Dudink 1994, esp. 403; and J. Wu 2003. My research on the 1637 anti-Christian incidents in Fuan and Ningde, discussed later in this chapter, has not uncovered any local Buddhist critique of Christianity at the time, and Buddhist lay people or monks in Mindong do not seem to have had a role in that campaign; see Menegon 1997. The affiliation of Zhiti Monastery with disciples of Feiying Tongrong and its Linji lineage is attested starting in the 1650s; see Wang Rongguo 1997, 484.

13. On Qing-period Buddhism in Fuan, see *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 1034. Starting in the Republican period, Buddhism underwent a movement of reform, and today it is very much alive in Mindong. In Fuan, for example, by 1990 there were 1,474 men and women engaged in religious life (monks, nuns, and professed lay people); see *ibid.*

circles and the higher echelons of the clergy, but their impact on the common people was slight. Fujian commoners mainly followed the kind of devotional practices encouraged by Pure Land Buddhism, primarily performed in domestic contexts, in small temples with just one or a few monks in residence, and in “heterodox” lay Buddhist congregations. Local Buddhist monks, like their Daoist counterparts, participated in gods’ festivals and performed death rituals and exorcisms for the common people, as attested by the “Customs” section of the Wanli edition of Fuan’s local gazetteer and by rules of local lineages prohibiting these “heterodox” and “wasteful” ceremonies. At times, however, monks were enlisted by lineages to maintain shrines dedicated to their tutelary deities, as was the case with the temple erected for the first ancestor of the Xue 薛 lineage of Liancun 廉村 village, in Fuan county. Although Buddhist and Daoist ritualists continued to provide services to local people, as T’ien Ju-k’ang observes, other religious traditions became equally attractive to Fujianese. Heterodox congregational religions, such as lay devotional groups and Christianity, and the cults of local gods not directly linked to the Buddhist or Daoist pantheons, in particular, offered compelling systems of belief and practice.¹⁴

Lay Devotional Groups: The Nonaction Tradition in Fujian

Heterodox lay devotional groups grew rapidly during the late Ming side by side with mainstream Buddhism. Although opposed by state officials and prominent monks for most of their history, these groups blossomed

14. On Pure Land Buddhism and popular religion, see Wang Rongguo 1997, 314–15; K. Ch’en 1964, 301; and Yü 1981, 73–76, 148–50. On “customs” in Ming Fuan, see [Wanli] *Fuan xianzhi* 2003, 31–32. The traditional ritual regulations in the genealogy of one branch of the Miao lineage in Muyang 穆陽 village, Fuan county (“Dong Lu Miao shi zongpu,” 1936) discouraged the employment of Buddhist and Daoist ritualists at village festivals, attempting to direct all resources toward the lineage’s own tutelary god, Lord Lanfu (Lanfu jun 蘭府君): “Each village every year on the fifteenth of the first month holds a *jiao* 醮 to which they invite Buddhist monks and Daoist priests, squandering money, and this is really useless. From now on we will have two stages for theatrical performances set up at the lineage shrine to honor Lord Lanfu’s birthday, and we will offer *jiao* to him. Each family will share in the expenses according to its status, and since squandering is a pity, each family’s contribution should not exceed a few coins, both to contain expenses and act appropriately. This is the good way one should hold a gathering.” On the Xue lineage temple, see FAXZ, 594; and Zhang Xianqing 2003b, 73. On heterodox movements, see T’ien 1990, 100.

along the Grand Canal and, starting in the 1630s, reached northern Fujian. One of the most important of these traditions was the Nonaction Teachings (Wuweijiao 無爲教), an offshoot of the Luo Teachings movement (Luo jiao 羅教). Started under the leadership of Luo Qing 羅清 in the late fifteenth century, the Luo jiao groups spread south from their home base in Shandong. Luo Qing declared the futility of current Buddhist practice and clerical organization and offered answers to common people in search of salvation from the miseries of life and death through the creation of lay communities devoted to meditation. In the process of moving southward, the founder's message mutated, and the movement split into numerous subtraditions and became subjected to government suppression for its potentially subversive populist message. Some groups in the Luo tradition adopted the autonym "nonaction" during the course of the sixteenth century. By the Jiajing period, the Nonaction groups reached isolated and mountainous Qingyuan 慶元 county in Chuzhou 處州 prefecture (Zhejiang), where they flourished among local farmers and artisans. In this locale, separated from Mindong by a high mountain range but facing the valleys of Jianning prefecture in northwestern Fujian, to which it eventually spread, the tradition came under the leadership of three successive patriarchs during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After reaching Zhejiang, the tradition branched out in Fujian and in Jiangxi, as well as the provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, Guangdong, Hunan, and Guangxi. Another group possibly linked to the Nonaction/Luo tradition, the Teachings of the Golden Hall (Jintang jiao 金堂教), settled in southern Zhejiang (Jinhua 金華 prefecture) and Fujian (especially in Xinghua prefecture) starting in the 1620s and was mentioned in 1637 by Fujianese authorities in connection with the first suppression of Christianity in Fuan (see below). Crucial elements in the ideology and ritual practices of these Nonaction sodalities are also found in Christianity: recitational prayer, congregational meetings for men and women, a belief in the coming to an end of the world, and emphasis on universal brotherhood rather than kinship-based rituality. For this reason, officials often lumped Nonaction and Christianity together in their accusatory memorials and blamed both for neglecting ancestral veneration.

By the Qing period, the tradition further mutated into a series of diverse groups later lumped by officials under the rubric "vegetarian teachings" (*zhaijiao* 齋教). These groups kept a vegetarian diet, engaged in recitational prayer, and involved men and women equally in all their

practices. In fact, women called “female mediums” (*nüwu* 女巫) in official sources occasionally became group leaders. Imperial officials often saw Christian practices as dangerously similar to those of these groups, particularly after women became prominent members and religious leaders in the Dominican communities. In 1729, during the Yongzheng reign, authorities in Fujian carried out the first campaign against some groups they labeled as “Nonaction.” These groups later assumed or were given the name “Teachings of the Vegetarian Hall of the Old Official” (Laoguan zhaijiao 老官齋教), a name that reappeared in a noted 1748 rebellion in Jianning county, around the same time as an anti-Christian suppression campaign in Fuan. That year, Dominican missionaries who had been arrested in Fuan during a large-scale anti-Christian campaign in 1746, shared the same prison cells in Fuzhou with some 45 Laoguan zhaijiao members awaiting trial. During this period, moreover, officials identified a local group of “bandits” in Fuan as possible adherents of the Nonaction Teachings, and Fujian Governor Chen Dashou 陳大受 (1702–51) expressed worries that they might be connected to the “Western Ocean heterodox teachings,” that is, Catholicism. Officials were usually uninterested in understanding the teachings they persecuted and perceived unrelated groups as connected despite important doctrinal differences. They therefore often grouped Nonaction followers and Christians together. The two groups inhabited a common religious space and, thanks to their common opposition to ancestral worship, were perceived as grave threats to the patriarchal order.¹⁵

15. On Buddhist monastic tactical distancing from “heterodox” lay movements and attacks against the Nonaction movement in the late Ming, see, e.g., Haar 1992, 211–12. For different versions of the origins of the Wuwei/Luo tradition in Qingyuan, see Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang 1992, 340 ff.; and Seiwert 2003, 255–60; on the “precious scrolls” (*baojuan* 寶卷) of this tradition, see Overmyer 1999, 124–25. The *baojuan* mentions Zhenghe 政和 county in Jianning prefecture as one of the first places to which the group spread in Fujian; see *Baojuan chujī* 1994, 358 (*Sanzu xingjiao yinyou baojuan* 三祖行脚因由寶卷, 33b). Northwestern Fujian (i.e., mainly Jianning prefecture), moreover, had been an area of diffusion of the White Lotus tradition of lay Buddhism since Yuan times, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century single monks in temples and many lay devotees still followed this tradition; see Chen Zhiping, ed., 1996, 237. On the Jintang jiao, see Seiwert 1992, 51–53. On the history of the Wuwei/Luo teachings in the Qing, see Overmyer 1976, 121–23; and Seiwert 1992, 34–38, and 2003, 251–59. On the Laoguan zhaijiao rebellion in Jianning in Dominican sources, see GM, 2: 250–52, report by Francisco Serrano, “Rebelión de Kien-ning-fú,” 1748. For Qing reports on the repression of

*Local Cults: The Lady of the
Water Margins, Linshui Furen*

In daily village life, however, Christianity more frequently shared space with the numerous cults to national and local gods, rather than with the groups of the Nonaction tradition. Christian missionaries absolutely opposed worship of any of these gods, a proposition that at times created tension with existing cultic associations, which required contributions to village festivals from every household. Christian opposition to cults also antagonized the state apparatus, since some cults had obtained imperial recognition and backing. Yet, local cults and Christianity shared similar characteristics insofar as certain areas of religious life were concerned, including in particular the practices of exorcism and healing and the participation of women in religious life.

Some “bureaucratic” gods more transparently symbolized the state at the local level: the city god (*cheng huang* 城隍); the martial god Guandi; the god of literature Wenchang 文昌; or the spirits of upright former officials. In Fujianese localities, there were also temples dedicated to other state-approved regional gods, such as Wuxian 五顯, or Mazu/Tianhou. Some gods were more intimately linked to local history and enjoyed an especially enthusiastic popular worship. In Fuan, for example, there were multiple temples dedicated to the Great King of the River (Jiang da wang 江大王) and to the female Daoist immortal Maxian 馬仙.¹⁶

Nonaction and Christianity in Fujian and Fuan, see two memorials penned the same day (QL 12/9/27; Oct. 30, 1747), Guoli gugong bowuyuan, Taipei, Grand Council Archives, docs. no. 1228, 1230.

16. Several English-language studies already exist on city gods (e.g., Feuchtwang 1977, Johnson 1985a, Zito 1987), Guandi (Duara 1988), and Wenchang (Kleeman 1994). As for the Fujianese official cult of Mazu, FAXZ, 229, mentions eleven temples to Tianhou in Fuan, mostly built in the Qing. Mazu as “Tianhou” (Celestial Empress) became an official goddess after the end of the Qing coastal evacuation of Fujian, and local elites built temples in her honor to signal their loyalty to state-approved cults, and thus state orthodoxy; see J. Watson 1985. The story of Wuxian, not always a truly “orthodox” god, is more complicated, as can be seen in Szonyi 1997 and 2002. Two temples to Jiang da wang are mentioned in Fuan, both built in the Qianlong period. According to a local legend, a huge tree floated from Wenzhou to the coast of Funing. When local people started cutting it, blood gushed out of it. Then the god revealed himself through a medium as “the Great King of the River” and ordered the locals to use that trunk to make his image, and to build a

The paucity of details in missionary sources on local cults reveals the lack of interest Catholic priests had for Chinese religions. But priests and Christians did not deny the reality of local gods and spirits. In one exceptional case, the Jesuit Aleni even showed a willingness to tolerate reverence for the city god as a spiritual symbol of the state, as long as it was purified of its superstitious elements and assimilated to the Christian guardian angels. This Christianized city god had no authority by himself, Aleni claimed; rather, he transmitted (*zhuada* 轉達) believers' prayers to the Lord of Heaven. Aleni further stated that in order to clarify the supremacy of the Christian god, the inscription on the tablet in the city god temples should read "Supernatural being charged by the Lord of Heaven to protect this city." But the arrival of the friars and the ensuing controversies put an end to this kind of accommodation. In fact, in spite of Aleni's attempt to baptize the city gods, missionaries regarded all Chinese gods as "satanic" rather than divine. They generally succeeded in banning the worship of gods, but it is unlikely that the legends and values associated with them and absorbed as part of local culture were totally erased from people's consciousness. The stories and iconography of gods and spirits offered a repertoire of values, imagery, and practices that continued to influence subtly the religious sensibility of Christian converts.¹⁷

The case of the Lady of the Water Margins, Linshui furen, the most popular deity in northeastern Fujian, is illuminating. By the nineteenth century in Fuan alone, there were at least eleven temples dedicated to her, and her cult still flourishes in Taiwan and northern Fujian. She is the protector of maternity and of children, from conception to adulthood, but she is also a virgin goddess who refused marriage in order to pursue Daoist knowledge. As explored in greater detail in Chapter 9, this identity offered a native parallel to the figures of Christian holy virgins, and her devotees and mediums supplied a local model for women's consecration to religious life. The spirit mediums of Linshui furen, called "masters of the techniques" (*fashi* 法師), were and are

temple in his honor; see FAXZ, 229; and *Funing fuzhi* 1991, 971. On Maxian's temples in Fuan, see FAXZ, 232; on the diffusion of her cult, starting in the Song, from southern Zhejiang to Mindong by way of Minbei 閩北, see Haar 1990.

17. On Aleni's interpretation of the city god, see Zürcher 1994, 57; for a translation of the relevant passage in *Kouduo richao* 8.1b–1a, CCT ARSI, 7: 528–29, see Zürcher, trans., 2007, 576. On Aleni and superstitions, see Zhang Xianqing 1999, 68–79, and 2003c.

mainly men, but occasionally women held this position. These masters create a sacred area through the placement of paintings of episodes from the Lady's life and her associated pantheon, and then conduct rites in the tradition of Lüshan 閩山, a synthesis of ancient local shamanism and Daoist techniques. The goals of these rituals are mainly to obtain cosmic harmony or rain; avoid scourges, such as tigers (once found in Fujian); and obtain and preserve the well-being of women and children. These ritual masters also perform seasonal rites of passage and after-death and funerary rituals.

Women have a symbolic place of pride in the cult, and male masters wear a skirt during functions to impersonate the goddess. According to legend, in her fight against the demons, Linshui furen surrounded herself with a ritual community of women with magic powers ("shamanesses," or *wu* 巫). *Fashi*, following the Daoist tradition, use rituals and texts to obtain the desired results, whereas female mediums are themselves possessed by the goddess. They do not perform elaborate rituals, which are reserved to the male *fashi*, but usually, while in a trance, they engage in healing through the dispensing of talismans and the performance of curing rites. In contemporary ethnographic surveys of the cult, such women are not only the mediums attached to temples but also the "apprentices" (*nü mentu* 女門徒). Female apprentices engage in personal exorcisms and other minor ritual practices and are attached to certain temples, living in communities consecrated to meditation and to ritual learning, temporarily or permanently.

The *fashi* also lead annual pilgrimages from affiliated temples to the mother temple during the first lunar month of the New Year. This is an occasion for large crowds to worship the goddess, contribute financially to the upkeep of the temples, and renew affiliations between different communities belonging to the cultic network. Devotees also present personal wishes and request oracles during these festivals, and occasionally rituals are performed at the temple or conducted in the houses of people seeking cures. For the Fuan Christian communities, these varied activities, especially those involving women, represented both a competitive challenge and an inspiration.¹⁸

18. For temples of Linshui furen in Fuan, see FAXZ, 228, 231; for temples in Mindong, see Xu Xiaowang 1993, 330; on rituals to Linshui furen and other gods (especially the Five Emperors) against natural disasters in the Fuzhou region, see, e.g., Wang Zhengzhong 1996, 136–221. The best treatment of Linshui furen in Western languages is Berthier [Baptandier] 1988 (in French), translated and revised

Local Cults: Tutelary Deities of Lineages

Another important category of gods that rarely appears with any prominence in regional studies of cults are the tutelary deities that Fujianese lineages considered protectors of their locale. Sometimes these gods were earlier official spirits of the *she* 社 altars, institutionalized by the Ming founder, which were appropriated by local lineages. In other cases, they were divinized ancestors or former local officials and could be honored in lineage temples jointly dedicated to Buddhist and Daoist deities or other popular deities, including Linshui furen. In Catholicism, these gods found a parallel in the patron saints of a church or a town, and as instances in Fuan Christian history reveal, they even found a match in particularly charismatic missionaries endowed with special spiritual powers in life, who in death became local unofficial “saints” by performing miracles or making revelations through dreams.

In Fuan, several lineages supported the cult of their own tutelary deity. Chen Ru 陳孺, for example, one of the ancestors of the locally prominent Chen lineage, had been a famous Daoist practitioner in the Song period. During the Chunyou 淳祐 reign of the Southern Song (1241–52), Chen Ru became an officially recognized local god and manifested his efficacy (*xian ling* 顯靈) by eliminating tigers that had been scourging the area. By the late Ming, his arts had reportedly been transmitted to all the mediums (*wu* 巫) in the county, and two shrines were dedicated to him, one in Shanghang ward, the home of the Chens, and the other on the outskirts of Fuan town. Another important local divinized ancestor was Xue Lingzhi 薛令之, first ancestor of the Xue lineage of Liancun village, who, according to tradition, had been the first *jinshi* from Fujian in the Tang dynasty. A number of shrines and temples dedicated to him are mentioned in the Fuan local gazetteer. Moreover, the Xue lineage and the other prominent lineage in Liancun, the Chens, performed sacrifices in front of his statue in a Buddhist temple known as Lingyansi 靈岩寺, which they built and maintained close to their ancestral village.¹⁹

in English as Baptandier 2008; see also Lo 1993; Xu Xiaowang 1993, 329–37; Lin Guoping and Peng Wenyu 1993, 162–80; and Baptandier 1996.

19. On the religious activities of lineages in Fujian in general, see Chen Zhiping 1991, 196–202; on the tutelary deities of Fujian lineages and their appropriation of the *she* altars, see Szonyi 2000 and Dean 1998b; on the lineage cults to Linshui

During their festivals, lineage-sponsored gods were paraded in processions and were brought to the ancestral hall of the lineage to accept the submission of the lineage members to their divine protective power. In locales with more than one lineage, the gods could be “shared.” In the village of Gantang 甘棠 in Fuan county, for example, the statue of the local god was paraded around the ancestral halls of the four local lineages in a set order. In other places, each lineage built a separate temple and worshipped separately. During the gods’ festivals, Daoist priests or local mediums were invited to officiate at exorcisms and rituals probably similar to the ones celebrated in honor of Linshui furen. These rituals obviously entailed communal expenses, and costs were divided among the lineage branches. Moreover, village elites competed for the control of these cults, as they competed for other managerial roles in the lineage, and tried to obtain official recognition of their deities.²⁰

In both regional cults like that of Linshui furen and village cults such as those to lineage tutelary deities, community solidarity found expression in rituals that sought to protect the village and its inhabitants from natural disasters, demonic possession, or sickness. These rituals incorporated Daoist and Buddhist elements. At the same time, because of the role of local elites in their development, these cults also functioned as symbolic venues for the exertion of control over the territory and expressed support for the existing social order. Missionaries and Christians had to find a niche in this social and religious space, and the priests in particular, as religious specialists, had to respond to popular demands for exorcistic rituals, rituals of purification from sin, and healing prayers. Their attempts to fulfill these demands embroiled them in this competitive market of the supernatural.

Besides the vibrant world of gods and spirits, however, another kind of spiritual entity inhabited the lives of Fujianese and embodied even

furen, see Szonyi 2002, 155–56. On the shrines to Chen Ru, see FAXZ, 228, 558, note collated from the Chongzhen edition (1638); for shrines and temples to Xue Lingzhi, see FAXZ, 225, 226, 229, 231; on the Lingyan Temple, see FAXZ, 593–94; and *Fujian Liancun* 1997, 64–67. Sometimes lineages even delegated to mediums, Daoist priests, or Buddhist monks living in the lineage temple the administration of the land provided by the lineage for the sustenance of temple cultic activities; see Chen Zhiping 1991, 189.

20. See Szonyi 2000, 110, and 2002, chap. 6; on the cults connected to the Gantang lineages, see also Chen Zhiping 1991, 193.

more powerfully than divine cults the dominant social hierarchy: the ancestors. Missionaries could easily label the gods as demonic and ask new Christians to forsake their cults—something that the Luo movement had also done—but a similar strategy for approaching the ancestors would have been disastrous, as the Jesuits well understood. Yet, this is precisely the route that the Dominicans chose to take.

The Discovery of Ancestral Rituals in Fuan, 1635

When the friars targeted one of the central institutions of local society, ancestral rituals, the gentry-led opposition and official response to this example of Christian iconoclasm was more severe than it had been during the actions against the images of gods in 1634. By the 1630s the Jesuits had concluded that most rites to the ancestors had only social and moral significance and did not violate the monotheistic nature of the Christian god, and were therefore not idolatrous. They allowed converts to continue the celebration of ancestral rituals and tried only to steer converts away from “modern” practices that did not reflect the purity of early Confucian rituality. But what the Jesuits saw as a pragmatic approach toward the social rituals of China was unacceptable to the friars, who interpreted those same rituals as idolatrous.²¹

When the friars first reached Fuan, they apparently chose to ignore the existence of ancestral rituals and remained unaware of the Jesuit position on them. Within months of their arrival, however, Caballero and Morales realized that families performed sacrifices to their ancestors not only at home but also in large ceremonies at lineage ancestral halls. The priests forbade home rituals to Christians, only to discover that some converted literati of the large Miao lineage of Muyang (穆陽; also written 穆洋) village carried on important ritual duties at grand seasonal ceremonies with the tacit approval of the Jesuits. After the arrival of some other Dominicans and Franciscans in 1635, the mendicants urgently sought a clarification on the matter from the Jesuits. Unsatisfied with their preliminary discussions with the Jesuit superiors in Fujian,

21. The Jesuits famously shared with some of their converts the idea that early Confucian thought in its purest form contained the knowledge of the Christian god (as the Lord on High, Shangdi, or Heaven), and that later Song accretions influenced by Buddhist ideas and popular religious superstitions had obfuscated that primeval truth.

they decided to conduct an ecclesiastical legal hearing in Dingtou. They interviewed a group of Christians and constructed an indictment of the tolerant policy of the Jesuits. Soon the voluminous papers produced during the proceedings in December 1635 and January 1636 were sent to the Philippines and Rome for theological examination. This was the beginning of the notorious “Chinese Rites Controversy.” The controversy that beset ecclesiastical circles in Manila, Madrid, Rome, and Paris for the next century mattered to the local Christians of Fuan only insofar as it affected their own religious practices. The new ideas of the European priests fundamentally challenged the central institutions of local life. Negotiating the conflict with ancestral traditions and finding acceptance in local society despite their new religious tenets became the major concerns of local Christians.²²

And they had reasons to be greatly concerned, as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8. Attacking ancestral rituals undermined the authority of lineages, one of the building blocks of village life in Fujian. Historians and anthropologists have long demonstrated the importance of lineages in southern China as inheritance groups owning common property, and have underscored their main function as “corporations” controlling and allocating resources to members. More recently, however, scholars in China and the West have highlighted the power of lineages as local social institutions that combined economic activities with ritual and ideological ones. All these factors contributed to the formation of lineages in Fujian starting in the Song, and lineages encompassed not only elites but families in all classes. In fact, a lineage may or may not have had collective assets, but it certainly had collective duties, including the core ideological element of ritual, the aspect that most disturbed the friars.²³

22. On the beginnings of the Rites Controversy, see *DMB*, 25–27; and Mungello, ed., 1994. Ricci quotation is from D’Elia, ed., 1942–49, 1: 118. For a brief description of the canonic trial of Dingtou, see *DMB*, 25; for a lengthier treatment, see Margiotti 1978; see also Biermann 1927, 46; and GH, 1: 115–19. On the Jesuit-Dominican discussions in Fuzhou, see, e.g., Margiotti 1978, 129–31; cf. *Bibliotheca Missionum*, 5: 765, no. 2147; and Furtado 1700, 9. Archival copies of the proceedings can be found in several European archives; cf. *Bibliotheca Missionum*, 5: 770.

23. For a summary of scholarship on lineages, especially in relation to Fujian, see Szonyi 2002, 4–8; cf. Zheng 2001, 9 (Introduction by Szonyi); and Ebrey and Watson 1986, “Introduction,” 5.

*Splitting the Community: Ancestral
Rituals and the Anti-Christian Response*

Late Ming Christian lineage leaders would never have imagined that their participation in the ancestral rites in Fuan would spark a debate that would last for over two centuries. The conflict, which involved countless theological commissions, several popes, two papal legates, the Kangxi emperor and some of his courtiers, and scores of China missionaries from different orders and congregations, ended in 1742 with a papal prohibition of ancestral rites and the cult to Confucius, reversed only in 1939. The political and ecclesiastical machinations of the controversy in Europe and China, already explored by scores of authors, need not concern us here. Rather, we will explore the experience that Fujianese Christians had of them.

The friars' indictment of ancestral cults and other rituals came as a great shock for the Fuan converts. The friars refused to hear confession from those deemed guilty of superstitious actions, and the most prominent Christian literati, including the community's lay leaders Joaquín Guo Bangyong and Juan Miao Shixiang, agonized over the issue. The crisis shook the young community to its roots and left the literati converts questioning the religious teachings they had absorbed from the Jesuits and doubting the mendicants' approach. Moreover, newly arrived missionaries with little language training—by September 1637 Fuan had four Dominicans and four Franciscans—only worsened the situation when they started engaging in street preaching and taking missionary journeys to northern Fujian and Zhejiang.²⁴ Along with their evangelical styles and attires, the attitude of the friars toward the rites alienated a number of erstwhile enthusiastic Christian men, especially in the village of Muyang, home of the Miao lineage. The Franciscans were particularly impetuous: rather than donning Chinese clothes, they continued to wear their habits of blue and white sack, left their heads bare, and brandished crosses while preaching. The method of the friars was perceived as aggressive and left many local converts unmoved, if we are to judge from what Caballero wrote in 1639: “[Christian literati] were so mired in their rites to Confucius and to the tablets of the

24. For details on the years 1637–38 and the first province-wide suppression of Christianity, see Menegon 1997.

ancestors that they persisted in their belief for more than five years after the arrival of Father Angel [Cocchi] and stirred up much opposition to our friars, both Dominicans and Franciscans.”²⁵

In response to the coldness of literati, the friars began directing their attention toward new audiences: first, male commoners (“ordinary men from the fields,” as one source calls them), and, later, women and children. This tactic led to further opposition from the gentry and lineage leaders, who were probably frustrated by the inertia exhibited by local authorities toward Christian activities in Fuan. The activism of the friars among commoners spurred Chen Hanxun, the member of the important Chen lineage who had published an anti-Christian pamphlet in Fuan in 1634, to travel to Beijing and present a petition asking for the expulsion of the foreign priests. In an attempt to thwart his plan, two Franciscans followed his steps but ended up being arrested in the capital. Officials sympathetic to the Jesuits in Beijing—the German Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666) was then in charge of the reform of the calendar—blocked Chen’s memorial but also swiftly arranged for the two friars to be expelled from the capital and sent back to Fujian, from where they eventually left for Manila. Clearly, the Jesuits disagreed with the methods of their foes and did not want the highest levels of the Chinese government to become involved in the affairs of the troublesome Fuan Christian community.²⁶

The actions in the Christian community of Fuan were indeed alarming provincial authorities in Fujian. At the time, high officials worried most about the diffusion of heterodox groups and lax coastal control. Between 1635 and 1637 the authorities had crushed the activities of a group in the Nonaction tradition mentioned above, the Teachings of

25. Citation from Caballero 1639, “Quinta Cosa,” f. 116r. On the attire of the Franciscans, see copy of a letter by the Jesuit Adam Schall in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica*, 161–II, ff. 196r–v.

26. The procedure for presentation of memorials directly to Beijing is described in Bodde and Morris 1967, 464–65. On Chen Hanxun, see Menegon 1997, 234; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 45–46, and 2009, 72–74. The two officials who helped Schall remove the Franciscans from Beijing were the head of the Astronomical Directorate, the Christian *jìnshi* Peter Li Tianjing 李天經, and the son of the famous Christian official Li Zhizao, Li Cibi 李次彪, another scientist in the Astronomical Directorate; see letter of Francisco Furtado to the Jesuit General Muzio Vitelleschi, October 1, 1638, in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica*, 161–II, f. 213r; and Brockey 2007, 104. I thank Ad Dudink for information on Li Cibi.

the Golden Hall (Jintang jiao). The gruesome execution in Putian (along the central coast of Fujian) of the group's leader, Dong Yingliang 董應亮, by slow slicing of the limbs, was meant as a warning and a lesson for common people to avoid illegal associations. In November 1637, as part of this larger crackdown on religious groups suspected of fomenting social unrest, the coastal patrol circuit intendant of Fujian, Shi Bangyao 施邦耀, ordered the arrest of three "barbarians of the Luzon clique of Matteo Ricci" (that is, three Franciscans from Manila) in Ningde, south of Fuan. The local police captured not only the friars but also some Christian converts from the Huang lineage of Dingtou who were accompanying them. According to official opinions, the crimes common to Catholics and Nonaction followers included disregard for ancestral rituals and the worship of gods, breaking of the rules of gender propriety, and the illegal assembling of crowds for the purpose of propagandizing their faiths. As clearly spelled out by Fujian provincial surveillance commissioner Xu Shiying 徐世蔭,

The eminent elders do not sacrifice any more to the ancestors and spirits. Men and women mingle in a disorderly way without separation. This is the utmost [expression] of the disruption of human relationships and of insanity! Moreover they call out and entice the crowds. At night they assemble and at dawn they disperse. . . . They arrive suddenly, fool the people, and incite chaos.

Devotional groups of the Nonaction tradition had repeatedly been accused of undermining ancestral cults and worship of approved deities, a consequence of their egalitarian ideology, the priority they gave to master-disciple relationships over kinship, and their disdain for the gods of popular religion, which they understood as "demons." At least on the surface, the similarity with Catholics was apparent to provincial officialdom. The accusations found in testimonials on the case confirm that provincial administrators perceived Catholic activities in Fuan to be within the framework of those of Nonaction followers.²⁷

27. Quotation from *PXJ*, 2.32b–33a. In their memorials on the Fuan case, officials referred to the cases of "Dong Yiliang 董一亮 [i.e., Dong Yingliang] and Niu Junchen 牛君臣," noting that these cases of "Dong Yiliang and the others should be taken as an example" (*PXJ*, 2.36a). They also ordered people in the same breath "to avoid the wicked practices of the Nonaction and Catholic teachings" (*PXJ*, 2.32b–33a). Dong Yingliang was arrested and executed in 1635 (1637 according to Seiwert 1992) as a follower of Master Cai Wenju 采文舉. I found no information on Niu. See Lian 1989, 55, 59; and Seiwert 1992, 50–51.

An aggravating factor in the case of Catholicism, however, was the participation in religious practices of “*xiucai* and Confucian scholars,” attracted by the “novelties and petty skills” of the Celestial Teachings, and seduced by the “cunning, deep and sophistic words” of Catholic propaganda. Those teachings had even reached the “poor villages and isolated region” of Fuan, the memorials lamented, and, “ordinary men from the fields,” following the literati’s example, had joined the heretical Christian sect. These men dared to challenge the officials, telling them that “since Confucius’s times, nobody had been able to learn from him,” but that “after the [Teachings of the] Lord of Heaven had reached China, people were exhorted to be good and to study Confucius.” Guo Bangyong added injury to insult when he proudly defended his new teachings, telling authorities that “to sacrifice to the ancestors is an empty formality” (*zhuiyuan siji wei xuwen* 追遠祀祭爲虛文), and that “the Lord of Heaven is the only real truth.”²⁸ Guo here followed the Jesuit position that contemporary neo-Confucianism was an atheistic and corrupted form of the original and admirable teachings of Confucius. The coastal circuit intendant rebuffed the converts by accusing them of flouting Confucius’s prescriptions “to show genuine grief at a parent’s death and keep offering sacrifices to them as time goes on.”²⁹ For the authorities, it was imperative to reform first of all the members of the gentry, with the idea that change would eventually affect the entire local community: “If we tell [commoners] that the *xiucai* cannot follow that religion, they also will abandon it. This is exactly why people become firmly convinced by heterodox teachings: one person [in position of authority] can excite ten others to believe; ten can excite one hundred, and they can in turn cheat ten thousand, and these can mislead other millions.” Authorities thus enlisted local leaders to re-establish local control. Among the provisions enforced to keep Catholicism at bay were recitation of the village compact, registration of all strangers, monitoring of the population through the *baojia* system of collective responsibility, and public abjuration of any heterodox religion, with the threat of losing gentry rank if one were caught harboring missionaries or practicing the forbidden religion.³⁰

28. All quotations are from *PXJ*, 2.33b; cf. Gernet 1985, 184.

29. Quotation from the *Analects of Confucius* (*Lunyu* 論語 1.9).

30. See *PXJ*, 2.33b–34a.

After this thorough campaign, most of the ten friars then in Fuan were expelled to Macau, and only a couple stayed behind in hiding. But pressure became so harsh for Christians that hosting the foreigners became almost impossible, and the last remaining Dominican, Juan García (1606–65), left Fuan by 1640 to recuperate his battered health on Taiwan. These expulsions ended a permanent Franciscan presence in this part of Fujian, but the Dominicans were able to return in 1642.³¹ This temporary debacle was caused by the government repression but also occurred because the staunchest and most authoritative lay member of the community, Guo Bangyong, had left Fuan for Manila in 1638, temporarily depriving local Christians of their main leader.

Radicalization of Christian Commitment and a New Public in the Early 1640s

At this juncture, the approved deities and spirits and their protectors, the gentry and lineage leaders, were prevailing. An unexpected outcome of the repression, however, was the radicalization of the key man in the Christian camp. Impelled by the 1637 incidents, Guo Bangyong committed himself fully to the Western religion, as his daring words to the intendant show. His adventure and residence in the Philippines steeled his resolve to uphold the new religion and return to Fuan emboldened to continue evangelization. The reaction of the local gentry after the doctrinal controversies of the mid-1630s and the provincial government suppression of 1637–38 also radicalized other converts, especially in the Huang lineage of Dingtou. Given the resistance by many literati to the friars' positions on rituals, however, the scope of Christian proselytizing expanded, introducing Christianity to new segments of local society. As mentioned above, commoners, rather than the lower gentry, were increasingly drawn by the friars' sermons to Christianity, and among them were a large number of women. After his return from Taiwan, Juan García printed the first Dominican *doctrina* in 1642 in Fuan. The text, written in simple language in the form of questions and answers, was targeted toward minimally literate commoners rather than students trained in the Confucian curriculum.³²

31. For more details on these anti-Christian incidents, see Menegon 1997.

32. The *doctrina* is entitled *Elementary Questions and Answers on the Holy Teachings of the Lord of Heaven* (Tianzhu shengjiao rumen wenda 天主聖教入門問答), 1642.

In March 1642, García, based in Dingtou and protected by members of the Huang lineage, was joined by two other missionaries from Manila, Francisco Díez, one of the friars expelled from Fuan in 1638, and a new recruit, Francisco Capillas (1607–48). They were accompanied by Guo Bangyong, now a member of the Dominican Third Order.³³ Assisted by a few faithful catechists, they moved from one hamlet to the next, preaching in public and residing with loyal Christian families. The number of converts had decreased considerably, due to many apostasies after the government crackdown of 1637–38, and the work of the missionaries was closer to that of vagrant monks than of resident priests. The return of Guo and the presence of the three energetic friars soon gave new impetus to conversions.

The most important development at this point was the growing number of female converts. The forced intimacy between missionaries and local households during the period of semiclandestine activity in the 1640s opened up the gates of the inner quarters to proselytism, as Francisco Capillas observed in 1647:

Due to the persecution, Christians hid Fr. Juan García for more than three years [in the 1640s] in the most secret places of their houses, which is where women usually reside. Thus [García] had to dispense with their usual customs and had to see and deal with the [women on a daily basis]. Due to this, [women] started losing the horror they had previously experienced in seeing and dealing with the [male] priest, and they learned about his [good] intentions through his words and manners. Thus we [Dominicans] started disregarding the ancient ceremonies [separating the sexes], and women would no more flee us. Up to this day, without our or their awareness, this has continued to prepare the way that the Lord has chosen to make [women] grow in faith and devotion.³⁴

The surviving network of loyal and radical Christian men led by Guo Bangyong encouraged participation by women in Christian ritual and devotional activities. Soon, a new Christian infrastructure grew, and the following of the new teachings became broader. Christians supplied the missionaries with funding and built chapels in Muyang and Dingtou. For the first time, they erected two churches, one for men and one for women, in the walled town of Fuan. These churches were financed by a wealthy member of the Chen lineage of Shanghang ward in Fuan, Juan Chen Wanzhong 陳萬鐘. The message of the friars had become so

33. GH, 1: 167–68.

34. Capillas 1894, 72.

attractive that even the well-off and literate Wanzhong, who belonged to the most staunchly anti-Christian lineage of Fuan, decided to join the Christian camp. Moreover, the activities of Christian women, though still segregated from men, started to move beyond the inner quarters. Women would even “travel from afar, and sleep for a few days at a time in the apartments of [other local] women due to their desire to receive instruction in the Christian doctrine.” Some started not only “following the common path of the Ten Commandments, but even the path to [religious] perfection.” This latter group, engaged in a more intense religious routine than the common faithful, was the first nucleus of “Christian virgins” (*beatas*), who would later become ubiquitous presences in Mindong communities.³⁵

The new conversions led to tensions that, rather than percolating only in the male public arena, also bubbled within domestic walls. Capillas observed that “the major conflict is between domestic enemies. Non-Christian parents [are pitted] against their Christian offspring. The husbands [wage war] against their wives, confiscating their religious images and burning them. When they see [their wives] pray, they curse them and at times beat them. They do this in fear that some harm could come to their families for being Christian.” The “harm” alluded to here was indeed real. Christian injunctions against ancestral rituals led lineages to include rules proscribing Christianity in their genealogies. This was the case in Suyang 蘇陽 village, home of the powerful Liu 劉 lineage. When in 1644 Father Díez reached the village and dared to preach publicly on the streets, he was confronted by local literati, who objected to the Christian position on ancestral rites. Finally, a literatus physically attacked the missionary, who was left unconscious on the ground. Riccio reports that the four hundred inhabitants of Suyang made a pact

35. The quotation on women is from *ibid.*, 72. Chen Wanzhong Ruowang (Juan 若望) 陳萬鐘, *zi* Jiechen 介臣 (in missionary sources “Kiay Chin,” i.e., Jiechen) was a native of Shanghang ward, Fuan. Born around 1615, “letrado y graduado” at age 47 in 1662, the first year of the Kangxi reign, he earned an *en-gongsheng* degree; see FAXZ, 343. His father was not Christian; his mother, Ines, was (see Morales et al. 1650). In 1644 “the houses of the Christian Juan Kiay-chin . . . were the best of the town [of Fuan], and he was the richest man in town”; see GH, 1: 195. According to the 1702 testimony of the Fuan literatus Wang Daoya 王道雅 (see p. 171), Chen abandoned Catholicism later in his life, after controversies over rituals to the ancestors and Confucius further inflamed the community in the mid-Kangxi reign; see Chinese testimony by Wang in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 168, f. 5v.

to keep Christians out of the village and to punish in the ancestral hall by caning any lineage members who refused to perform sacrifices to the ancestors.³⁶

Besides the rejection of ancestral rituals, the conversion of women and their devotion to the foreign padres emerged as troubling issues for Fuan gentry and lineage elders. The two matters were connected, since both challenged the supremacy of the patriline and undermined patriarchal control over the members of the lineage. Once again it fell upon members of the gentry and lineage elders to rally against the friars and their Christians and revive anti-Christian sentiments.³⁷

The “masquerade” that opened this chapter was the first large-scale episode of gentry and lineage reaction in Fuan. Yet, in spite of such a massive show of opposition, wealthy and influential men like Chen Wanzhong in Shanghang ward continued to offer funds and shelter to the priests. But the hostility of prominent members of the Chen lineage did not end with the mocking procession. After failing to win official support for their protest in 1645, members of the Chen lineage who identified themselves as “students of the Confucian school” robbed and set fire to Chen Wanzhong’s house, accusing him of sheltering the foreigners and of encouraging women to “act wickedly.” These Fuan students felt a moral duty to step in for the authorities to ward off heterodox customs and re-establish proper gender separation in the power vacuum of the last chaotic days of the dynasty. Once called to defend their illegal action in front of the county magistrate, the Chen justified their arson as a defense of local women from the polluting influence of foreigners bringing “disorder” to China (*luan* 亂, often used as a code-word for sexual misdemeanor), a defense that the county officials obviously had failed to offer.³⁸

The initial phase of contact among Dominicans, Fuan Christians, and local society examined in this chapter foreshadows the kinds of in-

36. Quotations are from Capillas 1894, 50; and RH, f. 159r, respectively. The provision mentioned by Riccio can be indeed found in the Liu lineage genealogy (1850 edition), as discussed in Chapter 5.

37. For a discussion of the connection between fear of “ritual decay” in the lineage and women’s religious heterodoxy, see Furth 1990.

38. See GH, 1: 195; Chinese memorial of Chen in Morales et al. 1650; Jesuit report of these facts in Gouvea 1998, 316–17. On the role of the gentry and local schools in implementing “good customs” during the Ming, especially in Fujian and Guangdong, see Schneewind 2006, 138–62 *passim*.

teractions that would characterize the community's entire history. A continuous tension between Christian religious imperatives and the social imperatives of Chinese daily life informed that dynamic. Bordering on illegality and heterodoxy, Christians nevertheless were an integral part of local society, spanning all social levels, from the circle of literati to commoners and later to women. These men and women were also historical actors in the last decade of Ming rule, a period that saw in quick succession a shift from political efforts of reformist literati to salvage the dynasty to attempts by local officials to curb social unrest and the ferment of heterodox sects to an increasing devolution of government authority to local elites and lineages in their locales. In Fuan, this story is reflected in the life of Guo Bangyong and his fellow literati, and in the experience of intermittent unrest and repression of the years 1634–45. The contingencies of the upcoming Ming-Qing war, as discussed in the next chapter, however, created a unique moment of opportunity that not only magnified controversies but also served Christianity, which, through political expediency and social experimentation, became more firmly rooted in the soil of Fuan.

THREE

The Golden Age of Opportunity, 1645–1723

The friars' opposition to ancestral cults and their promotion of women's religious activities placed Fuan converts in a difficult social position during the 1630s and early 1640s. They encountered hostility and repression from both the state and the local elites. The Manchu invasion, however, turned the religious allegiance of Christian literati from a liability into a strength and offered them a means of gaining social standing and receiving official sanction for their faith. The events of the Ming-Qing transition show the importance of historical contingency and of improvisation in the spread and establishment of Christianity in Fuan. The localization of the faith depended on long-held hopes and values that nurtured the religious longings of converts: a desire to extinguish sin, hope for salvation after death, and a sense of community and personal fulfillment expressed in piety and spirituality. But fleeting events linked to historical junctures also carried great weight in creating the most favorable environment for the implanting of Christian values and practices.¹

The state of war and the political and military volatility between 1644 and the early 1650s were loyalty tests for local elites: Should they

1. On the concepts of sin and salvation in the life of Chinese Christians, see Menegon 2006a.

side with the new power, the Manchus, or remain faithful to the old order of the Ming dynasty? Most southern literati and officials faced this dilemma. In Fuan, a large portion of the elite remained loyal to the defeated dynasty, represented by short-lived and fractious regimes in Zhejiang and Fujian. As soon as it was clear that the Manchus were gaining the upper hand, however, ideals evaporated in favor of pragmatic grabs for power. Often split along lineage lines, old configurations of power adapted to the new order. The Chen of Shanghang chose the Qing. Many Christian literati on the other hand, inspired by the reformist ideas of their youth and linked by blood ties to Liu Zhongzao 劉中藻 (?–1649), the local military leader defending Mindong from the Manchu advance, sided with the Southern Ming. In spite of the final defeat of Liu and the deaths of the major Christian leaders in the ensuing carnage, however, the Christian community did not disappear from Fuan. The devastation of the war and the coastal evacuation ordered by the Manchus to obliterate military resistance and banditry, in fact, created a favorable environment for unchecked growth of the Christians. The lineages were in shambles and no longer threatened expulsion and persecution of their Christian members. Christianity also received protection from the new Qing regime of the Shunzhi and Kangxi emperors, and from Kangxi's close associate Tong Guoqi 佟國器 (d. 1684), governor of Fujian in the 1650s–1660s. This new acceptance in local society began to affect lineage practice, the status of women, and matrimonial alliances, as explained in greater detail in Chapter 5. From the 1640s to the 1720s, political and military events offered favorable conditions for deep social and religious changes and allowed further entrenching of the new teachings and practices into local society.²

Opportunity Arises

Following the suicide of the last Ming emperor in 1644, the capture of Beijing by Qing forces, and the collapse of the loyalist Hongguang 弘光 court in Hangzhou, Fujian became one of the last strongholds of the Southern Ming regimes. The Prince of Tang 唐, Zhu Youjian 朱由檢, known as the Longwu 隆武 emperor after the name chosen for his reign,

2. Sections on the Ming–Qing transition in this chapter have been published in Menegon 2003.

was enthroned in Fuzhou in the summer of 1645. Longwu asked Jesuit missionaries to request military help from the Portuguese in Macau. For the same reason, in December 1645 the emperor visited Giulio Aleni, then vice provincial of all the southern Chinese Jesuit missions, and allocated funds to him to repair the Catholic church in Fuzhou. Moreover, according to Jesuit sources, in January 1646 Longwu issued an edict of toleration allowing the building of Catholic churches in Fujian. During this early stage of the Manchu invasion, the Dominicans in Fuan remained neutral, and the Ming loyalist government evinced no special interest in the Spanish friars, since they had no leverage with the Portuguese government. But thanks to their association with the Jesuit “Celestial Teachings,” they and the Fuan converts also received official protection and eventually joined the resistance movement led by the Longwu official, Liu Zhongzao.³

After the Longwu emperor left Fuzhou in early 1646 to establish a temporary capital in Yanping 延平 (northwestern Fujian), he continued to try to enlist the Jesuits in his government. Martino Martini (1616–61), who also took up residence in Yanping in 1646, was approached by Liu Zhongzao, then one of the highest military officials in the regime. Liu introduced the missionary at court and solicited Martini’s assistance as a military advisor. Liu was a native of the village of Suyang in Fuan county, and this fact resulted in Martini’s appearance in Mindong. Zhu Dadian 朱大典, the warlord of Zhejiang, whom Martini had met years earlier, had asked for the Jesuit’s presence as counselor “for the defense of cities.” Liu escorted Martini across Mindong on his trip to Zhejiang, probably in the spring or early summer of 1646. When the Christians in Fuan heard of Martini’s arrival in the company of such a prominent local official as Liu, much commotion ensued. At the suggestion of some converts—probably Guo Bangyong, who was a friend of Liu, and Miao Shixiang, who was related to Liu by marriage—the friars decided to meet Martini to galvanize local Christians and to publicize the respect that Catholic priests received from the imperial government. No doubt,

3. On the relations between the Jesuits and the Hongguang court, see Dunin-Szpot 1710, ff. 71v–72r; Pfister 1932–34, 141; Fang Hao 1988, 1: 200, Dehergne 1982, 254; and Brockey 2007, 111. On Jesuit-Longwu relations, see Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Chinois* 1323; Fang Hao 1988, 1: 200–204; Zürcher 1997b, 115–16; Dudink 1997, 146n63, 147n68; and Brockey 2007, 111–12; on the granting of an imperial inscription to the church of Fuzhou, see Gouvea 1998, 311–12.

the Christians were also looking for official protection and an extension of the emperor's edict of toleration to their area. In the previous two years, they had been subjected to frequent harassment and had twice been summoned by local gentry to legal hearings before officials of the Longwu emperor, both in Fuzhou and Fuan.⁴

When the Dominican Díez went to meet Martini, however, the Jesuit, sitting in a sedan chair and dressed in an official's silk robes, "went on his way without taking any notice of him, leaving the friar out of countenance in the presence of a thousand lookers on, and of some Christians who had expected by that means to have gain'd credit and honour to their Spiritual Fathers." Martini allegedly did not want to risk losing face through association with the ragged friars wearing simple robes. Liu Zhongzao then organized a banquet in Martini's honor and invited his friend Guo Bangyong as representative of the Christians. A debate on the divergent ideas of Jesuits and friars ensued, and Guo defended his "spiritual fathers" in front of Liu, a brave act considering Martini's suggestion to Liu that the friars be expelled. In spite of this affront, the friendly relations between Liu Zhongzao and the Jesuits, as well as the personal ties between Liu and Guo, achieved the protection sought by the Christians and afforded more freedom to the friars in their work. Around this time, Liu issued a proclamation permitting Catholicism in the Fuan region, an extension of the edict of toleration Longwu had issued in 1646. The friars' increased freedom of movement led to new conversions, once again especially among women. Patronage from state authorities also enhanced the prestige of men like Guo Bangyong and Miao Shixiang, who finally saw their

4. For a biographical note on Martini, see Dehergne 1973, 166. On Liu Zhongzao, see Fang Hua 1999; and Menegon 2003, 346–48. On the connections of Liu Zhongzao with Guo Bangyong and Miao Shixiang, see RH, f. 237r ("Joaquín . . . was a great friend of the Viceroy [Liu]") and f. 234r ("During the government of the Viceroy Lieuchunzao [i.e. Liu Zhongzao], [Miao] had to accept the major charge of military mandarin, both because he received an order from the Viceroy, and because they were relatives"). Martini's journey to Fuan must have happened before July–August 1646, when Martini surrendered to the Manchus in the region of Wenzhou 温州 (southern Zhejiang); see Martini 1655, 125–26; Melis 1983, 403; Gouvea 1998, 330; and Menegon 1998b. On Martini's relations with Zhu Dadian, see Gouvea 1998, 329; and Martini 1655, 125. Zhu was also a good friend of the prominent convert Yang Tingyun (Mingde Xu 1997, 382) and had contacts with Giulio Aleni in the late 1620s (Lin Jinshui 1996, 200).

religious choice vindicated. Segments of the local gentry, however, were displeased with this protection and awaited the right time to attack the Christians.⁵

Qing Turncoats and Anti-Christian Literati:

The Chen Lineage of Shanghang Ward

In the fall of 1646, the Longwu emperor fled Yanping before advancing Qing troops. The Qing army killed him in Tingzhou 汀州, at the beginning of October. Liu Zhongzao, however, continued to organize local people, including “mountain bandits,” to form resistance units on the border region between Zhejiang and Fujian. According to the Dominican chronicler Riccio, by early November 1646 Liu and his troops were in Muyaung. Qing armies had by then surrounded Fuzhou, and the leaders of the large Chen lineage, living inside the walled town of Fuan, decided that resistance was useless and prepared to surrender to the Qing. When Liu sent a platoon of men to the city to solicit funds for his resistance movement, the Chen killed all the envoys and plundered the houses and properties of Liu and his partisans in the city. Liu then commanded his troops to attack Fuan. Despite orders to refrain from pillage, the troops ravaged the town and set fire to most of the buildings. Loaded with goods, the pillagers headed toward Funing, where they planned to continue plundering. On their way, they were ambushed and annihilated by Qing troops, who were penetrating the territory of Funing from the coast of southern Zhejiang. Soon thereafter, the Qing armies entered Fuan without resistance and began fortifying it; Liu’s remaining soldiers dispersed, and Liu retreated into the mountains. Liu’s opponents, Riccio notes, “took revenge on him by seizing his houses, palaces, properties, and orchards, destroying everything without leaving any memory of him, as if to make it impossible for him to return to power.”⁶

5. Quotation from Navarrete’s *Tratados*, in Cummins, ed., 1962, 167. On Martini’s travel to Fuan, see Menegon 1998b and 2003. On the proclamation by Liu Zhongzao, see J. García 1649b, 35; and Dudink 1997, 147n68.

6. For a description of these events, see RH, ff. 190v–91v; and Martini 1655, 126. Quotation is from RH, f. 193r. Chinese sources actually confirm that at this juncture Liu, in his capacity as an official of Regent Lu’s regime, started soliciting funds from the gentry to pay for rations and expenses of the troops, and enrolled among his soldiers some contingents of She 畚, an ethnic minority living in the mountain-

The Chen lineage leaders behind the attacks on Liu and his friends had been assailing the missionaries since the 1630s. They seized this opportunity to purge Fuan of Christians. A series of rebellions, labeled White Lotus sectarian uprisings by the Qing but having clear Ming loyalist motivations, had recently erupted in Qing-controlled Yanping prefecture and in Gutian 古田 (Fuzhou prefecture). The Qing governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian, Zhang Cunren 張存仁 (d. 1652), issued orders to quell the rebellion, and those orders soon reached Fuan. The Chen, exploiting the occasion, rushed to the new local magistrate, the Liaoning Han bannerman Guo Zhixiu 郭之秀, and denounced the Christians as members of a heterodox sect. Their doctrine was “much worse than the sect of the White Lotus, since it taught to disobey one’s elders and to slight the authority of husbands, and it fostered irreverence towards the departed.” The denunciation added that the missionaries “arrogated to themselves authority over [Chinese] subjects in order to have them revolt; usurped the love of naïve young women in order to have them totally committed to their desires and appetites; and enticed the vulgar plebs in order to introduce new cults, new customs, and new ways of thinking, contributing to the ruin of the empire.” The Chen accusations touched on the main controversies that had emerged in the previous decade, namely, the prohibition of ancestral cults and the conversion of women, and spelled out the dire consequences that such Christian activities could have on the structures of patriarchal authority and of the state itself. In August 1647, the magistrate duly added Catholicism to the names of forbidden groups, ordering the arrest of the missionaries, who went into hiding in Dingtou. They escaped official attention until November, when Francisco Capillas, who was traveling to see some converts, was intercepted by a platoon of Qing troops and arrested. He was closely interrogated, tortured, and imprisoned indefinitely. All the efforts of the converts to petition the magistrate and persuade him through a bribed local educational official to free Capillas failed.⁷

ous areas of Fuan county. They are probably the “mountain bandits” alluded to by Riccio; see Zhu 1985–86, 2: 315. Although they had been in the area since the early sixteenth century, the existence of the She was acknowledged by the local gazetteer only in the late nineteenth century. This could explain the definition of “bandits”; on ethnic She perceived as bandits in Han sources, see Wing-hoi Chan 2006.

7. On these so-called White Lotus rebellions, see Lian 1989, 5. On the situation in Fuan at the time, see RH, f. 198v. Zhang Cunren was Fujian-Zhejiang governor-

Liu Retakes Fuan: The Christians' Window of Opportunity

By early 1647, the Qing had spotty control of most of Fujian, including Funing subprefecture. Only the region of Xiamen, dominated by Zheng Chenggong and his family, was beyond Qing reach. An offensive launched by the former strongman of the Longwu regime, Zheng Cai 鄭彩, brother of Zheng Chenggong, soon succeeded in retaking important positions in Fuzhou prefecture in the summer of 1647. The forces of Regent Lu 魯, the remaining pretender, captured the provincial capital itself. Successes in the Funing region soon followed. By October 1647, Liu Zhongzao had retaken parts of the counties of Luoyuan 羅源, Ningde, Zhenghe 政和, and Fuan. According to Riccio, Liu besieged Fuan three times. He was routed the first two times, and he personally headed the final siege, which started in December 1647. The resistance weakened somewhat after an arrow killed the Qing county magistrate Guo while he was standing on the city walls. When the new military leader of the Qing camp captured a loyalist soldier, he extorted the names of the Fuan citizens who were collaborating with Liu. Among the best known were Miao Shixiang, Guo Bangyong, and Chen Wanzhong. Other Christians also sided with Liu. This leak provoked retaliation against relatives and friends of the loyalists still inside the besieged town. Among the victims was the Dominican Capillas. He was taken from prison, accused of being one of the leaders of the Christians and connected to the loyalists, and executed in mid-January 1648. The siege ground on until March, when Qing forces, after having exhausted their provisions, left quietly at night. Upon entering Fuan town, Liu immediately purged the turncoats from the Chen lineage. Summary executions of Qing supporters and confiscation of their property followed. Among the people executed was “the most authoritative person in that whole large family,” the literatus who had spearheaded previous anti-Christian campaigns in Fuan.⁸

general from December 1645 to early 1648 (ECCP, 56–57). Guo Zhixiu was a *jian-sheng* from Shenyang (FAXZ, 261). For details on the Chen lineage's accusations, see RH, ff. 198v–99r, source of the quotations here; cf. GH, 1: 209–10; and San Roman 2000, 67.

8. On the military campaigns in Fujian at this time, see Struve 1984, 93, 111, 222n16, 230n52; and ECCP, 353. On the killing of Magistrate Guo, see FAXZ, 300. As late as November 1647, Miao Shixiang had apparently not declared allegiance to the loyalist cause, since we read in RH, f. 207v, that Miao was then trying to petition the Qing authorities in Fuan for the freedom of Capillas. This is an indication

The Fleeting Christian Moment

Liu's victory offered Christian leaders their first opportunity to obtain substantial political power for themselves and for their community. Miao Shixiang and Guo Bangyong became military commanders in the army of Liu Zhongzao, who, in the name of Regent Lu, established control over the subprefectural seat of Funing and Shouning county in Fujian, and Qingyuan and Taishun 泰順 counties in southern Zhejiang. Even before the fighting with the Manchus broke out, Liu had been courting the support of Fuan Christians for some time. As mentioned above, he invited Guo Bangyong to the official banquet for Martini in 1646. Liu then extended Longwu's edict of toleration for Christianity to Fuan county. Before the first Qing occupation of Fuan, in summer 1646, Guo received properties (houses and land) in Muyang from Liu's local regime. Finally, after Liu occupied Fuan again in 1647, Guo was charged with patrolling the delta of the Fuan valley and commanded a unit of soldiers. Thus authorized, Guo established a military government in Dingtou, with power both to name subordinates and to discipline military personnel and civilians, even by death. Liu allocated a considerable sum of money to him—Riccio observed that Guo "did not use force [to govern Dingtou] but money, which is what everybody obeys." Probably with some of those funds, he started building a rather large church in the Spanish style, similar to the ones he had seen in the Philippines. Guo's church, which he would not live long enough to see finished, would become the largest Christian structure in Fujian. The aggressive promotion of Christianity in Dingtou encouraged a number of people, some of them literati, to receive baptism.

Considering his relatively low social standing, Guo enjoyed remarkable power. Several factors contributed to Guo's ascendancy. First, the number of degree-holders in the region of Funing, as already noted, was extremely low. The volatile situation dramatically curtailed the number of available intellectuals who would embrace the loyalist cause. The decision by the numerous and powerful Chen lineage in Fuan to side with the victorious Qing underscores the discontent felt by the local elite

of the extreme fluidity of the situation at the time, when a change in loyalty could happen suddenly, depending on the winds of war. On Capillas's execution and the disposal of his body, see RH, ff. 210r–v. The local gazetteer is silent on the death of Chen, described in gory detail in RH, f. 224r–v.

toward all the violence and instability. For the sake of order, the most powerful families forsook the old dynasty. Guo's enmity toward the Chen turncoats and his friendship with Liu were, in fact, crucial advantages in his ascendancy within the local loyalist regime. Second, Guo's connection with the foreign priests became an asset for the Ming loyalists. In search of military know-how and assistance and in exchange for possible help, Liu Zhongzao courted the Jesuits by offering Christians his protection. The Christian leaders benefited by gaining authority. For Liu, Guo's standing among converts, especially in the village of Dingtou on the Baima harbor, made him a good potential commander of an existing network, cemented by religious ties. Most of those Guo selected as militia chiefs were Christian converts. Christian loyalist leaders, although sincerely committed to the fallen dynasty, were also clearly striving to achieve a safe position for Christianity in Mindong and to advance their own social standing locally.⁹

A rift between Liu Zhongzao and Guo Bangyong developed in the last months of loyalist control over Mindong, however. The tactical alliance between Liu's regime and the Christians was clearly based on immediate interests and thus shaky. A few days before Liu Zhongzao's departure on his final military expedition in 1649, an incident involving one of his four concubines disturbed the harmony of the loyalist camp. This concubine, surnamed "Vuang" (Wang 王), had come into contact in 1646 with local Christian women in Muyang; she, her close relatives, and a female servant had soon been baptized by Juan García. After the reconquest of Fuan in 1648, Liu established a residence for his family in Funing and gathered all the members of the family there. When the concubine arrived, she appeared before Liu in unusual attire—a veil and a simple cotton dress. She refused sexual intercourse on the grounds that concubinage was not acceptable to Christians. Next she and her entourage refused to participate in preparations of a solemn ceremony for Liu's ancestors. Liu, oblivious to Confucian gravitas,

9. The importance of Dingtou as a Christian stronghold is confirmed by Riccio's report that Guo chose the ancestral village of the Huang lineage as the seat of his "tribunal" precisely because of the flourishing state of that Christian community. Information on Guo here is culled from RH, ff. 236r–37v. On the church built in Dingtou, see Navarrete's *Tratados* in Cummins, ed., 1962, 179: "[The church was] the biggest there ever was in China. It was built by an excellent Christian Chinese, who had been at Manila [i.e., Guo], and in his town he built a church exactly like that he had seen at Manila, in size, shape, and ornament."

entered the women's apartments and beat Wang and a servant. In a public act of repudiation, she and her maid were put in a sedan chair packed with a few days' rations of rice and sent to Dingtou to join García. Liu also issued an official document ordering that all Christian women who took vows of chastity be denounced by their families and exiled to Dingtou.¹⁰

Guo Bangyong wrote to Liu, remarking on Liu's about-face in his policy toward Christianity; Liu angrily responded that in his past meetings with the Jesuits Aleni and Martini, as well as in his readings about Christianity, he had never come across teachings such as those propagated by the friars on matters of female chastity and ancestral veneration. Unfortunately, nothing further was recorded about the incident. A few days after this exchange, Liu was routed by Qing forces at the Zhejiang border. Soon the forces of Regent Lu lost cohesion due to internal struggles, and Funing became isolated. The Qing armies surrounded the region, Liu committed suicide in Fuan as the military code demanded, and a number of Christian leaders perished when the Qing took the town. Miao Shixiang was decapitated immediately after the fall, but Guo Bangyong was able to escape from Dingtou by boat. A turncoat commander captured and executed him and his family shortly thereafter.¹¹

The contentious issues at the core of the conflicts in the 1630s and 1640s re-emerged sharply in 1649 and threatened to destroy the position of authority earned by Guo Bangyong and his associates for their military merits. As Liu had remarked to Guo:

Even if I am not your fellow Christian, nevertheless I have carefully read the books written by Masters Ai [Ai Rulüe 艾儒略, i.e., Aleni] and Wei [Wei

10. This episode is narrated in RH, ff. 228v–32r. In his 1671 “Declaración y manifiesto . . .,” (not to be confused with the “Manifiesto y declaración,” cf. GH, 5: 40), Varo identified the concubine in Riccio's account as “Bibiana Vuang,” i.e., Wang; see GH, 1: 225. The reference to four concubines can be found in J. García 1648, f. 48r. According to the 1750 funerary inscription of Liu (in Fang Hua 1999, 54), his wife was surnamed Miao 繆, and his two concubines were surnamed Wan 萬 and Lin 林. The concubine Wang was repudiated, and thus her name cannot be found on the tomb, a sign that she never reconciled with her husband. On the dilemmas over concubinage faced by late Ming Christians, see Huang Yi-long 2005, 137–56.

11. For a précis of Liu's exchange with Guo, see RH, f. 231r. On the death of Liu and the Christian loyalists, see RH, ff. 234v, 239r; see also DMB, 27, where the date of death of Liu Zhongzao is given as May 22, 1649. This information is apparently based on Franciscan sources.

Kuangguo 衛匡國, Martini], and it is clear that their law is correct and great, and it has nothing obscure or irrational. However, now in our county all of a sudden the wives start to turn their backs on their husbands in order to follow the [Christian] religion, and this is surely going to be a great sorrow for Masters Ai and Wei! . . . Fortunately, upon reflecting on the right words and the original doctrine of Masters Ai and Wei, which forcefully prohibit this matter of female [chastity], I came to the conclusion that to believe in the Celestial Teachings is permissible, and thus I am myself ready to defend and support them. But if you condemn Masters Ai and Wei, and defend these evil people [yao ren 妖人, i.e., the Dominicans], then you are contravening the rules of your own religion! It is quite clear that I will not dare abandon the two Masters to follow some evil people!¹²

For Liu, then, Christianity was acceptable as long as it conformed to the Jesuit model. Christians in Fuan, however, thought otherwise and continued to follow the friars' interpretation. In spite of this fallout with Liu Zhongzao, the creation of the small "Christian fiefdom" of Dingtou, ruled by Guo Bangyong, policed by his Christian-led militia, and physically dominated by an imposing new church, was a tangible demonstration that the Dominican version of Christianity was gaining ground. The year 1651 saw the completion of the large church initiated by Guo. In spite of his demise and the fall of the Longwu emperor, the community-building efforts of Dingtou Christians continued. Even after the Manchu conquest, some Christian families, like the Huang, guaranteed generational continuity to the community across the dynastic divide. In the new climate of tacit approval of Christianity under the Qing dynasty, the Christian faith, passed on as a family tradition through the generations, remained alive and even became a common fixture of local life, and gentry opposition to Christianity abated in the new political climate of the early Qing.

After the Qing Conquest (1654–62):

Imperial Favor in the Shunzhi Period

Conditions in coastal Fujian posed challenges for the localization of Christianity in Mindong as the Qing established itself. The new regime had only a shaky hold in the south, since Ming loyalists persisted with

12. Chinese text in J. García 1648, ff. 51v–52r; published in Menegon 1998b, 640.

their fighting. In November 1651, a Southern Ming fleet appeared off the coast of Funing. The next day, a group of loyalists landed and targeted the large church built by Guo Bangyong and the Dingtou Christians and burned it down, perhaps to eliminate a possible fortress. Again, in 1655, a large fleet commanded by the loyalist warlord Zheng Chenggong made an incursion into the harbor of Fuan.¹³

The Dominicans in Fujian happened to be stationed both in Qing-controlled territory and in the region of Anhai 安海 in southern Fujian, dominated by Zheng Chenggong. The friars' loyalties were split. The Italian Dominican Victorio Riccio became a retainer in Zheng's "court" and acted as Zheng's envoy to the Philippines to conclude a peace accord with the Spaniards, who feared an attack by the warlord. But the Dominicans in northern Fujian sided with the new Qing regime. When in 1653 a Christian in Dingtou became involved in a small anti-Qing revolt, the friars tried to dissuade him from an enterprise that—as they rightly predicted—would be easily quelled by Qing authorities. A March 1654 edict by the governor of Fujian, Tong Guoqi, a close associate of the future Kangxi emperor, probably had a defining impact on the loyalties of the friars. The Qing governor officially allowed the practice of Christianity on the grounds that it had also been approved in Beijing. Tong's wife was Christian, and the governor himself was so sympathetic to Christianity that he eventually converted in 1674. During his tenure in Fujian, Tong protected local Christian communities. He funded the reconstruction of the church in Fuzhou in 1655 and authored a eulogistic preface to a popular catechism published by the Jesuit Antonio de Gouvea (1592–1677). Following his example, a number of officials in the provincial administration extended protection to the Jesuits and to the "Fujianese literati" (*Min shi* 閩士) adhering to their teachings.¹⁴

Tong's stance not only stemmed from his personal interest in the Christian faith but also reflected the court's position during the Shunzhi

13. RH, ff. 249r–v; DMB, 1075–76.

14. On Riccio, see José Maria González 1955; and Wills 1980; on his diplomatic mission, see GH, 1: 299. On the anti-Qing plot in Fuan, see GH, 1: 295. On Tong Guoqi, see ECCP, 792–94; Struve 1989, 2; Fang Hao 1988, 2: 49–54; Crossley 1999, 109–13; and Wills 2004. For the text of the Fuzhou church inscription, with names of sympathetic officials, see *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian xubian* 1966, 2: 963–80; for Tong's preface to Gouvea's *Essential Explanatory Guide to the Holy Teachings of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shengjiao mengyin yaolan* 天主聖教蒙引要覽, Fuzhou, 1655), see Xu Zongze 1989, 164–65.

era (1644–61). Immediately after the conquest of Beijing and despite the split in loyalties among missionaries in different parts of the country, the permanent presence of the German Jesuit astronomer Adam Schall at court resulted in a seal of approval for all missionaries. Christianity appeared to be accepted by the new regime. Thus it became customary for priests and converts at the local level to mention the services of the Jesuits at court to escape the attentions of local magistrates. Important literati converts in the imperial and provincial capitals had been the main patrons of the Jesuits in the late Ming, but the intellectual fascination with the Celestial Teachings had waned among the upper classes in the provinces starting in the 1630s. In the early Qing, the influence and intervention of high officials like Tong Guoqi, who had direct relations with the Jesuits in the imperial service, offset the literati's loss of interest. The support of such powerful officials reverberated in the attitude of subordinate local officials.

The Dominicans and Christians in Mindong benefited from this new climate of toleration. They slowly reconstructed the churches lost during the Ming-Qing fighting and even began proselytizing in new locales. In the late 1650s, for example, Juan García and Francisco Varo (1627–87) traveled to Zheyang 柘洋 (modern Zherong 柘榮), near Funing. In 1662, a wealthy Christian in Zheyang built a chapel inside his mansion. Later he donated the building to the mission as a church and residence for the priests. Although the situation in Fuan was peaceful, new locales were not always welcoming. In 1658, for example, García was arrested in Funing and expelled from the city, in spite of his protests of being a representative of the same religion tolerated in Beijing. Official hostility arose from generic antiheterodox feelings as well as from the general climate of political uncertainty in Fujian. Zheng Chenggong's spies were ubiquitous in Qing territory in the 1650s, and the Qing policy of coastal evacuation, begun in 1656, to cut off Zheng's supply lines made travel between the walled towns and the countryside extremely dangerous and a source of government suspicions. In Fuan itself, where Christianity by now had a stable footing, the coastal evacuation provoked the destruction of churches in Luojaxiang 羅家巷, Dingtou, Sangyang 桑洋, and Xiyin 西隱.¹⁵

15. On the coastal evacuation in Funing subprefecture, see Zhu 1985–86, 395–96, 403. Along the major highways of Funing territory, authorities had wooden palisades built and posted warnings threatening trespassers with the death penalty. On

Nevertheless, official protection from Beijing made most officials comfortable with the missionaries, who now abandoned the confrontational attitudes toward authorities they had held during the late Ming. Francisco Varo, in particular, became a master of Chinese etiquette and polite conversation and won the goodwill of magistrates with European gifts (“juguetes de Europa”), a time-honored Jesuit practice. Even when the Jesuits lost favor at court during the Calendar Case of 1664–69, and most missionaries in the empire were arrested and deported to Guangzhou, magistrates in Fuan sheltered the Dominicans. Varo wrote in 1667 that “although here in Fuan four different magistrates in the past three years learned that we were hiding in their counties, they have ignored this fact. Thus, we have been able to attend secretly not only to the sick converts *in extremis* but also to the healthy ones in their villages by administering the sacraments to them.” He elsewhere explicitly noted that in 1664 “the magistrate of Fuan protected us, advising us to hide,” and that as a consequence, “in this province of Fujian we have lost no church, nor other possessions of the Christian community.”¹⁶

After the defeat of Zheng’s forces in 1662, Fujian remained a difficult “frontier” for the Qing regime. The Manchus granted Feudatory Prince Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠, based in Fuzhou, extensive powers to govern

the vicissitudes of García and the fear of spies, see GH, 1: 336; on the destruction of churches in the 1660s, see GH, 1: 337.

16. The Calendar Case occurred soon after the death of the Shunzhi emperor. A council of regents dominated by the Manchu nobleman Oboi was formed to run the government during the minority of the Kangxi emperor, then still a boy. The regents tried to undo many of the sinicizing policies implemented by Shunzhi, and it is at this juncture that Muslim astronomers and the anti-Christian literatus Yang Guangxian 楊光先 (1597–1669) found a favorable climate for launching a campaign against the astronomical reforms that the Jesuits and their converts supervised in the capital. Between 1664 and 1669 the court missionaries were arrested, some of their Chinese collaborators were executed, and an order was issued to deport all missionaries in the provinces to Guangzhou, where they would be held until they could be sent back to Europe. In 1669, however, the young Kangxi, supported by his grandmother Grand Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang 孝莊 (1613–88), reinstated the Jesuits in the astronomical office as part of a general campaign to retake full control of the government from the regents. This initiated a period of imperial favor toward the Jesuits at court. For a summary of the extensive scholarship on the case, see Chu 1997. Quotations are from letters of Varo to his provincial, Funing, Nov. 4, 1664 in Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1074, f. 287v; Muyang, Sept. 4, 1667, in Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1074, f. 289; and Muyang, Dec. 5, 1667, in APSR, *China*, vol. 7, doc. 9, f. 83v.

the unruly province on their behalf. When in 1673 the Kangxi emperor threatened to abolish the system of feudatories, Wu Sangui 吳三桂, the most powerful among them, rebelled and was hesitantly followed by Shang Kexi 尚可喜 in Guangdong and by Geng in Fujian. The continuance of the Qing state was uncertain for several years, but once the Qing pushed Wu Sangui's forces back, they secured the surrender of the other warlords. Geng Jingzhong surrendered in November 1676, and units loyal to the Qing proceeded to reoccupy all the major cities of Fujian, although hostilities continued until 1678. Even during the rebellion, however, the Dominican mission had remained safe. In 1672 Varo met with Geng and obtained permission to purchase a building in Fuzhou, a concession Geng made in order to court favor with the Spanish government of Manila, with whom the prince wanted to open a direct commercial route. Varo observed in a 1675 letter that, thanks to Geng's patronage, officials in Funing "treated us with many honors . . . and my visits to the mandarins of these districts were rather effective in moving many gentiles to conversion." When in 1677 the Qing retook control of Fujian, the Dominicans apparently did not suffer retaliation and could and would continue their work under the Qing policy of benign neglect.¹⁷

The Kangxi Reign (1662–1722)

A new positive climate for Christianity in Mindong would slowly develop after Kangxi took full control of the imperial government in 1669–70, when he rid himself of the council of regents who had exercised tutelage over him during his minority. However, this change did not derive from an official imperial endorsement of Christianity in China. The expression "tacit toleration" well describes the ambiguous policy of the Kangxi emperor toward Christianity after the resolution of the Calendar Case. The emperor bestowed his personal favors on the court missionaries for their technical services, thus indirectly benefiting their associates in the provinces, but he always carefully avoided mak-

17. On Geng's relations with Varo, see José Maria González 1955, 164; letter of Varo to provincial, Fuan?, July 27, 1675, in Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1074, f. 314r, mentioning that "in this province of Fujian where we are, [the Tartars] do not hold a palm of land, but it is all governed by *our friend*, the 'Regulo' [i.e., Prince Geng]"; and letter of Varo to provincial, Muyang, August 17, 1677, Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1074, ff. 316r–318v.

ing any legal concessions to the Christian enterprise in China. After 1669, in fact, the further propagation of Christianity among Han subjects was expressly forbidden. This prohibition, however, was never seriously enforced during the Kangxi reign, and the provision that missionaries could care for existing communities meant that Christian religious propaganda could in practice spread. In 1692, the so-called Edict of Toleration of Kangxi, a document granting explicit imperial permission for Catholic activities, solidified this position.¹⁸ Between the 1670s and 1700, several Dominicans joined the mission in Fujian, establishing new communities as far north as southern Zhejiang and south to the region of Zhangzhou. The internal life of these communities, especially in Fuan, continued to develop, with the establishment of lay associations, the building of chapels, and the continuation of both communal and individual ritual and devotional activities, as Chapters 5 and 6 detail.¹⁹

Later in his reign (1700–1722), however, Kangxi raised his vigilance. High officials in the provinces and at court submitted several anti-Christian memorials to him, and clashes with papal envoys on the question of the Chinese rites further alienated the aging emperor. He decided in 1706 to impose a “residence permit” (*yinpiao* 印票) system on

18. See Adrian Dudink's essay “Opponents” in *HCC*, 515, for a description of this policy of tacit toleration. An example of the informal protection supplied by the court Jesuits to the Mindong mission is offered by a minor anti-Christian incident in the region. When the Franciscan Lucas Estevan arrived in Ningde in 1681, the local magistrate, possibly irritated by the opening of a new church, issued a ban against Christianity (see the Spanish translation of a December 1681 anti-Christian decree, in *SF*, 7.2: 1244). The ban soon was extended to Fuan and Funing. Varo petitioned for protection to the prefect of Funing and the governor of Fujian, and Gregorio Luo Wenzao and some Christian literati from Fuan tried to defend their cause in Fuzhou. However, it was due only to the intervention of the Jesuits Verbiest and Gabiani with the governor of Fujian that the matter was finally settled in 1682. Probably as a consequence of this incident, the Franciscans decided to leave their outpost of Ningde to the cares of the Dominicans in 1683; on this case, see *SF*, 7.2: 1237–38, 1243–45.

19. See *GH*, 1: 489–500. Francisco Varo's letters dating to the 1670s and 1680s contain incidental remarks on Christian life; see esp. Varo 1678. An interesting 1683 report on the state of the mission by Manuel Trigueros (1644–93; in China in the period 1680–93), unfortunately in a bad state of preservation and partly unreadable, includes memorable supernatural episodes of Christian life, such as exorcisms, miracles and prodigies, apparitions and dreams, and conversions of important individuals; see Trigueros 1683.

the missionaries. The permit required adherence to the Jesuit position on the “Chinese rites.” The 1706 decision had important consequences for the Dominicans in Fujian. Since they could not accept the imperial order, most of them were obliged to leave their missions in 1707. Two of them remained incognito. Moreover, at this point the emperor appointed the neo-Confucian scholar Zhang Boxing 張伯行 (1652–1725) governor of Fujian. Before moving to another post in 1709, Zhang prepared a memorial recommending that the Catholic churches be turned into schools, the Christian communities dispersed, and the foreigners expelled. He hoped to stop the “disintegration of morality,” which he attributed to the cult of the Lord of Heaven, and the abandonment of cults to the ancestors and Confucius, a direct reference to practices of the Dominicans in their communities. Knowing of his impending transfer to the governorship of Jiangsu, he did not transmit the memorial to the emperor, but it circulated widely among his students at the Aofeng 鰲峰 Academy he had established in 1707 in Fuzhou. The memorial argued that the coastal prefectures, including Funing, were the most affected by Catholic activities:

In coastal provinces such as Zhejiang, Guangdong, and Fujian, [Catholics] are particularly numerous. Since the time I took office [in Fujian in 1707], I have been conducting detailed investigations, and have discovered that their followers are increasing day by day. . . . All of us owe our life to our parents. Our roots are the ancestors, and they in turn find their origin in Heaven. I never heard that one should disregard the parents and the ancestors, only to separately pray to something that acts in the guise of Heaven, and I have never heard that besides Heaven there is some “Lord.” As soon as their teachings arrived here, parents and ancestors did not receive the due sacrifices any more. Instead they diffused their theory that the Lord of Heaven is superior to Heaven. This is a blasphemy against Heaven, and destroys the principle of [proper] human relations. Yao 堯, Shun 舜, Yu 虞, Tang 唐, Wen 文, Wu 武, and all the other subsequent sages passed down [their wisdom] to Confucius, whose Way is great and renowned. From the capital to the smallest county, temples have been erected [to the Sage], and sacrifices have been conducted for thousands of years [to him], a most glorious and revered precedent. But as soon as their teachings arrived, they destroyed the reverence for Confucius and no longer paid obeisance to him. This is blasphemy against Heaven and an offense against the sages. . . . Among those who join those teachings, there are no distinctions between men and women, who mix indiscriminately in common places. This is harmful to our civilizing customs. Along the coast of Fujian, in locales such as Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Xinghua, Zhangzhou, and Funing, they have flourished in great

numbers. Each church is headed by a Westerner, who burns incense and preaches. They accept throngs of disciples, and [the adherents] grow day by day, so that it is impossible to keep in check [their spread]. I truly fear that they have unfathomable (*bu ke ce* 不可測) intentions. . . . I had to report these facts to Your Majesty since I have seen them with my eyes here in Fujian.²⁰

Jonathan Spence has labeled Zhang a “purist,” and Zhang’s pronouncements against the Catholics of the Fujian coastal region should be seen in the context of his efforts to reform the climate of the province and re-establish orthodox Confucian mores. However, in spite of his call for the proscription of Catholicism, the imperial government took no action. The Kangxi emperor had warned him to respect the local customs of Fujian: “Each place has different customs—the emperor told him—don’t try to change them. Just make sure that your area stays peaceful.” In fact, Zhang ignored the emperor’s advice and tried to modify Fujianese customs he decried. For example, he attempted to curb the financial and ritual excesses of weddings and funerals, and he ordered that young Buddhist nuns be returned to their families and married off. Zhang also championed the upholding of rituals offered to Confucius and the former sages and established or revived neo-Confucian academies in Fuzhou and elsewhere. He complained that in Taiwan local officials had neglected the promotion of altars to worthies and chaste women. So it is little surprise that he found Catholic activities incompatible with his plans for the moral reform of Fujian. Catholics did not offer rituals to Confucius and the ancestors and observed “no distinctions between men and women, who mix indiscriminately in common places.” Zhang was probably unaware that in Fuan county some Catholic girls remained unmarried while engaged in religious life; otherwise he would have asked for their prompt marriage, as he had done with Buddhist novices.²¹

20. Zhang Boxing 1937, 175–76, “*Niqing fei Tianzhutang shu*” 擬請廢天主堂疏 (Memorial petitioning for the destruction of Catholic churches), 1709?

21. Zhang Boxing was a philosopher, not an official, and was promoted to the post of governor by personal intervention of the Kangxi emperor. During his tenure in Fujian, he tried to stabilize prices and implement some administrative measures, but he also published Confucian compendia, promoted the establishment of schools and academies, and engaged in zealous efforts to reform Fujianese customs; see Spence 1992, 127; and Kutcher 1999, 101–4. On Zhang’s academic influence in Fujian, see ECCP, 51; Fu 1966, 504n1; Lin Jinshui and Xie Bizhen 1997, 265–67; and HCC, 518. Kangxi’s comment is quoted in Spence 1992, 127; cf. Kutcher 1999, 103.

But to Kangxi, a peaceful province mattered most. Fujian had experienced a long period of turmoil in the second half of the seventeenth century, and the emperor deemed social peace and a certain toleration of innocuous local “eccentricities” the best strategies for keeping the empire together. To Kangxi, the religion of the Lord of Heaven was just a cult under state control, and, in Adrian Dudink’s words, “as long as Christians were not opposed to the state and did not create chaos, they were to be tolerated and allowed to practice their rituals in their churches.”²² Even when, during the last few years of the Kangxi reign, officials in charge of the southern coastal regions repeatedly asked for the expulsion of the missionaries (for example, the brigade-general of Guangdong, the Fujian native Chen Mao 陳鼎, in 1717), the emperor took no action, which left matters ambiguous. After the 1707 expulsions, the Dominicans Francisco Caballero (1678–1738) and Magino Ventallol (1647–1732) continued to work in Fujian, for instance. In 1715, moreover, four other Dominicans entered China, and in 1718 another four arrived. Since none of them had *yinpiao*, the governor-general of Guangxi-Guangdong, Yang Lin 楊琳, who had learned of their passage through Guangzhou, informed Fujian Governor Lü Youlong 呂猶龍 of their whereabouts, and orders reached Fuan in 1719 to arrest them. Fuan Christians, however, first hid them and then deputized two literati and members of the Third Order, Pablo Miao and Pedro Chen, to defend the Christian community with a petition presented to the governor. The governor ordered the missionaries to return to Macau, but none did. He finally dismissed the case on the basis of the 1692 positive edict of Kangxi toward Christianity and blamed the Fuan magistrate for disturbing the local peace of common people. Lü probably acted leniently because of the emperor’s dismissal in 1718 of Yang Lin’s recommendation of the suppression of Christianity. Kangxi approved in principle the banishment of the missionaries proposed by Yang and ratified by the Council of Nine, but added in his own rescript to “wait several years for another edict to authorize the prohibition of the Western religion.” Clearly, a distinction was made between the foreign priests and the Chinese Christians. Priests without imperial authorization (*yinpiao*) were theoretically illegal residents, but Christian

For details of Zhang’s moralizing policies in Fujian, see Zhang Boxing 1937, 59–61, 111–13; and Lin Jinshui and Xie Bizhen 1997, 266.

22. See Dudink in HCC, 517.

commoners, whose beliefs had become a family tradition and a fixture of the local religious panorama, were peaceful subjects now following innocuous customs of their choice. As Kangxi had pointed out to Zhang Boxing, “Each place has different customs; don’t try to change them. Just make sure that your area stays tranquil.”²³

Internal Development

After the Qing conquest, the “different customs” of Christianity continued to root themselves deeper into the communities of Mindong. The relative stability of the mission in this period, with dwindling gentry opposition and prevailing government toleration, allowed for an increasingly effective implementation of the friars’ religious rules, which had stirred so much controversy in the late Ming period. Juan Bautista de Morales, who had left East Asia in 1640 to travel to Rome and present evidence against Jesuit ritual laxities, returned to Fuan in 1649 carrying a 1645 papal decree forbidding all “superstitions.” He translated its main provisions into Chinese and circulated the decree among local Christians. The document clearly proscribed ancestral rituals and tablets, the cult of Confucius and of the city god, and the burning of paper money for the dead. Finally it enforced the so-called positive law of the church, including respect of fasting days and full implementation of baptismal and deathbed rituals for women. Given the devastated economy of Fujian after the conquest, enforcement of these rules probably presented no particular difficulty. Ancestral halls had been destroyed, and lineages had no resources to engage in lavish ancestral rituals and enforce lineage discipline. Most converts, moreover, were commoners who had little to do with the cults of Confucius and the city god. At the local level, this represented a victory for the friars’ position.²⁴

In the matter of ancestral rituals, however, the Dominicans offered a new Christian interpretation of filial piety, further discussed in Chapter 8. Morales authored a tract entitled “Explication of Catholic Filial

23. On Lü’s dismissal of the case, see GH, 2: 124–30; for the imperial rescript to Yang’s memorial, see Fu 1966, 127.

24. For an English version of the 1645 decree of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, see Noll 1992, 2–5; for the Chinese version, see Morales 1650?, ff. 177v–r [sic]; and Filippucci 1683a, f. 9r. On the collapse of lineages and the destruction of ancestral halls during the coastal evacuation of Fujian, see Zheng 2001, 215–23.

Piety” (“Shengjiao xiaoqin jie” 聖教孝親解), which circulated as a manuscript in the 1650s. He encouraged dignified funerals but reiterated the prohibition of ancestral rituals as usually practiced. He only obliquely allowed offerings of “ordinary things” to the Lord of Heaven on behalf of the ancestors to rescue them from the pains of purgatory. The Dominicans concurrently tried to explain to their literate followers the theological reasoning behind Rome’s decisions. Morales and his pupil, the younger Varo, collaborated with some Fuan students (*xiushi* 秀士) to write a treatise discussing the meaning of sacrifice, entitled “A Critique of Sacrifice” (“Bianji” 辯祭). We do not know exactly when it was written (probably in the 1650s or 1660s) and how widely the treatise circulated, but the Jesuits alleged that through this and other writings by the Dominicans, “the Chinese controversies among the missionaries provoked by some of them were inconsiderately and scandalously communicated to the neophytes still fresh in the faith.” The position upheld in “A Critique of Sacrifice” was based on the discussion of superstition, sacrifice, and idolatry contained in the works of Thomas Aquinas and represented the theoretical basis for the Dominican prohibitions.²⁵

Over time, the Dominicans remained adamantly opposed to what they saw as superstitious rituals, but they nevertheless came to accept certain local practices. Varo, for example, allowed the burning of incense in front of the images of the ancestors during the festivities of the Chinese New Year. The Fuan native bishop Gregorio Luo Wenzao 羅文藻 (1616–91; for his portrait, see Fig. 3.1), also a member of the Dominican order, advocated special Christian ancestral symbols to be used at funerals, as did the Dominican Magino Ventallol during his tenure as vicar apostolic of Fujian. Compromise was necessary, and in order to become integrated as a form of local religion, Catholicism, even the Dominicans’ strictly orthodox brand, needed to make adjustments.

25. The “Explication of Catholic Filial Piety” is preserved in the Vatican Library, Morales 1650; Spanish translation in José María González 1959; cf. GH, 5: 24. The original text of “A Critique of Sacrifice” is lost, but it was “rescued” in a refutation “orally transmitted” in 1681 by the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues (1645–1704) to the Fujianese Leontius Li Yifen 李奕芬, the son of Li Jiugong. The refutation, entitled “An Impeachment of ‘A Critique of Sacrifice’” (“Bianji canping” 辯祭參評) is published in CCT ARSI, 10: 363–438; cf. also Albert Chan 2002, 50–51; Lin Jinshui 1994, 66–69; and Standaert 1995, 11. The quotation from the Jesuit source is in Filippucci 1700, 118.



Gregoire Lopez, Chinois de Nation, de l'Ordre de S^t Dominique, Evêque de Basile et Vicairé Apostolique a la Chine.

Fig. 3.1 Portrait of Luo Wenzao (Gregorio López) as Vicar Apostolic of Nanjing (1685–91) and Titular Bishop of Basilinopolis (1690–91), in Louis Le Comte, *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état present de la Chine*, Amsterdam: Henri Desbordes and Antoine Schelte, 1698, vol. 2, plate following page 171; Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Ch 62.33.8*.

Until the late 1680s, a wide latitude of opinions on rituals prevailed among missionaries and Christians in Fujian, spurring a debate that involved some converts. The margins for discussion increasingly narrowed after 1700, however, when two papal legations forcefully, and fatefully, confronted the Kangxi emperor in the Rites Controversy.²⁶

But these high-level discussions mattered little for the daily religious lives of Fuan Christians. As a modified method for paying respects to the dead developed and a Christian sense of filial piety was being instilled over generations through practices, writings, and sermons, Christianity became more acceptable in Mindong. Local communities enjoyed a time of unprecedented calm thanks not only to imperial toleration and the noninterference of local officials but also to substantial lack of gentry opposition. In fact, Christians counted several members among the gentry in Fuan. As observed by Fr. González de San Pedro in 1710, the requirements for Christians were known to all, and the rules accepted as a fact of local life:

It is well known to all that in order to become Christian it is necessary to abandon all these ceremonies, rituals, and tablets. Therefore, when [people] ask to be baptized, they already know that they have to abandon those things. And in many places the gentiles themselves would be scandalized if they saw a Christian keeping the tablets, and they would think that he has betrayed the law of Christ.²⁷

By the early 1720s, in spite of the Dominicans' status as illegal residents, the Christian communities of Mindong were again enjoying a period of relative prosperity. A report by Eusebio Fernando Oscot (1694–

26. Luo Wenzao's original name at birth was Wenzhao 文昭, as found in the list of collators of Raymundo del Valle's *Xingshen shiyi* 形神實義 (1673), but he later became known as Wenzao. On New Year's rites, see Varo 1685; see also GH, 5: 354, no. 5, letter of Pablo Domingo Nien, November 10, 1768; cf. *Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide* 1907, 1: 479, 302. On Luo's and Ventallol's provisions, see Witek 1994, 194–95; and GH, 2: 47n8. The Jesuit Archives in Rome preserve the 1702 Chinese testimonials on the rites by many Christians, including the Fuan native Joseph Wang Daoya; see ARSI *Japonica Sinica* 160, no. 27, and 168, nos. 5 and 6; cf. SF, 8.2, 751n133.

27. González de San Pedro's "Breve Relacion," quoted in GH, 2: 47n8. As explored in Chapter 9, depending on their theological position and interpretation of church directives, priests in different communities of Fujian followed a range of practices regarding ancestral tablets, going from outright prohibition to permission of modified tablets.

1743) covering the years 1718–23 details conversions in several mountain hamlets as well as in larger villages along the valleys, charitable activities by wealthy matrons and literati, pious devotions among members of the Third Order, accompanied, as always, by occasional episodes of iconoclastic destruction of “idols” upon baptism and discussions with literati on matters of doctrine. When news of a general prohibition of Christianity reached Mindong in 1723, the Christians were busy constructing a large church in Fuan with the contributions of benefactors from the Chen lineage, a sign that the Christian community had no inkling of what was to come.²⁸

28. A long report by Eusebio Oscot dated May 12, 1733, preserved in APF, *Acta Congregationis Particularis super rebus Sinarum et Indiarum Orientalium*, vol. 28, ff. 143–65, incorporates a description of Christian life in the period 1718–23 in some villages of Fuan county; for a transcript, see GH, 2: 136–44.

FOUR

Suppression and Persistence,
1723–1840s

The 1723–24 Campaign in Fuan:
Beijing Politics or Mindong Disorders?

“On the day of the Most Holy Rosary in the year 1722, some noble Christians donated to me a large house that they owned beside the old church [of Fuan], with a large piece of land around it. Thus, we [Christians] started slowly to build the project, something that even many infidels desired, as they joined us to help. It is one of the best, or perhaps the best, church we have in all of China.” With these words, the Dominican Eusebio Fernando Oscot proudly described the efforts of Fuan Christians to build a new church during the last year of the Kangxi reign. Decades of coexistence with local society and a growth in numbers had emboldened the local Christian community, and inflamed its piety. Their enthusiasm extended even to the “infidels” who volunteered their labor for the new church. Christians in the Chen lineage granted the land, the construction materials, and the tools. Several of them were literati and members of the Dominican Third Order. The benefactors included a rich matron, mother of some of those literati, and her daughters, consecrated as *beatas*. Many months were spent on the construction, under the benign eyes of the Fuan county magistrate,

until in mid-June 1723, like a thunderbolt, an order from the governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian reached Fuan. The governor-general ordered the magistrate to issue a public prohibition of Christianity in his jurisdiction, to confiscate the local churches, to compile lists of converts, to oblige the local “Christian virgins” to get married, and to make sure that lineage and *baojia* leaders (*fangzu zhang* 房族長 and *xiangbao zhang* 鄉保長) implemented these orders. Missionaries and Christians in Fuan were shocked and panicked. The harsh measures were unfathomable. Recent years had seen neither disorders nor incidents with local elites or common people, or any falling-out with the county officials. Social harmony and a cozy relationship with officials had been the norm. A delegation of four local Christian literati visited Fuzhou to gather information, and some news received by way of the Jesuit Visitor Giovanni Laureati (1666–1727), revealed that the new emperor, Yongzheng, had personally endorsed these policies. The governor-general who had implemented the imperial will, the high-ranking Manchu nobleman Gioro Mamboo (in Chinese Man-bao, 滿保, 1673–1725), was only zealously following Beijing’s lead.¹

This direct enforcement of central governmental control over the communities of Fuan represented an important shift from the reigns of Shunzhi and Kangxi.² After gentry opposition had abated in the early

1. The festival of Our Lady of the Rosary (first Sunday of October) fell on October 4, 1722. On the construction of Fuan’s church, see the anonymous “Relación de nuestra persecucion” 1723?, from which the quotation comes, in APSR, *China*, vol. 4, doc. 23, f. 135r; cf. also a 1725 report by Eusebio Oscot in APSR, *China*, vol. 4, doc. 24, f. 4r; and another 1733 report by the same missionary quoted in GH, 2: 159n12. The local magistrate confirmed the scale of the works when he complained in 1723 about the large amount of funds spent by Christians on the construction of the new church inside the walled town. He also described fifteen other churches in the county; see Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 316 (8-h); APSR, *China*, vol. 9, doc. 12b. The Chinese text of Gioro Mamboo’s orders, YZ 1.5.12 (June 15, 1723) is quoted in the proclamation by Fuan’s magistrate in APSR, *China*, vol. 9, docs. 12a and 12b; Spanish version in GM, 1: 113–14; French version in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 1875–77, 3: 347. For the Chinese text of the response of county magistrate Fu Zhi to Gioro Mamboo (mid-June 1723?), see Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese*, 316 (8-h). On the delegation of Fuan literati, see GH, 2: 155–57.

2. The period 1721–1800 has been called by Robert Entenmann an era of “retarded growth”; see HCC, 562–67. This expression was earlier used also by Kenneth Scott Latourette (1929, 180) to define the period 1707–1839, the time between the enforcement of the residence permit (*piao*) system by Kangxi and the Opium War.

Qing, foreign missionaries in Mindong had occasionally faced restrictive policies toward religious groups and missionaries, dictated for the whole empire, but Christianity as such was not forbidden, and local Christians did not encounter outright opposition to their beliefs. Local Christian activities remained a matter of concern to Mindong alone, and the provincial and central governments did not intervene. With the accession of Yongzheng, however, all this changed. The muffled opposition to Christianity by high central and provincial officials brewing during the Kangxi period finally found expression in the new reign and exploded into a full-fledged campaign. Zhang Boxing, the man who had denounced the corrupting customs of Fujianese Christians over a decade earlier, was named president of the Board of Rites in 1723, and thanks to his efforts anti-Christian policy recommendations reached the new emperor. Concurrently, another official who had attempted to forbid Christianity as governor of Zhejiang in 1691, Zhang Pengge 張鵬翮 (1649–1725), received the honorary title of grand tutor of the heir apparent and was named a grand secretary in January and March 1723. Zhang Pengge apparently presented three memorials, asking for the proscription of Christianity in the provinces and the continuation of the mission only in Beijing, where the foreign priests could be useful.³

But these recommendations were hardly needed. The Yongzheng emperor had over the years developed a negative impression of Christianity. As a young prince, Yongzheng had been privy, through his music instructor, the Lazarist Teodorico Pedrini (1671–1746), to the endless ritual controversies and jurisdictional struggles between the Jesuits and

3. These early documents by Zhang Boxing and Zhang Pengge, mentioned in Jesuit sources, apparently have not survived; a later routine memorial drafted by Zhang Boxing as president of the Board of Rites, dated YZ 2.12.18 (Jan. 31, 1725), covering the management of the missionaries' properties and their expulsion to Guangdong can be found in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 64, 61. Zhang Pengge's hostility to Christianity dated to 1691, when, as governor of Zhejiang, he forbade Christian practices in his province. In response, the Jesuits asked the Manchu high official Songgotu to help deflect the attack. Songgotu's memorial to the emperor spurred Kangxi to issue a recommendation in 1692 to treat Christian faithful the same as Buddhist or Daoist practitioners, allowing them to attend rituals (literally "burn incense") in their churches; later historiography gave this document the high-sounding name of "Edict of Toleration." In spite of the defeat of his position that year, however, Zhang obviously never abandoned his resolve to have Christianity banned. See Zhang Pengge's biography in ECCP, 49–51; cf. also G. Huang 1995, 28–29.

their ecclesiastical enemies and had developed a strong distaste for his father's leniency toward these importunate and quarrelsome foreigners. The final years of the Kangxi reign, moreover, had been beset by factional struggles for the accession to the throne, and one court Jesuit, the Portuguese João Mourão (1681–1726), had sided with one of Yongzheng's brothers, earning the enmity of the future emperor and eventually execution by strangulation. Among the allies of Yongzheng's competitors for the throne were high-ranking Christian members of the imperial clan, whose conversion represented, for the emperor, the epitome of cultural and political treason and a betrayal of their own Manchu identity. Secret memorials denouncing the conversion of banner-men in the capital in 1723 probably only deepened Yongzheng's anxieties for the integrity of Manchu ways. Finally, and most important, the energetic emperor cultivated an agenda of general reform that extended not only to government procedures and economic policies but also to popular customs and morals. Scholars have dubbed this reform agenda the imperial "civilizing mission" of the High Qing period, an effort that encompassed the reigns of both Yongzheng and his son Qianlong. Based on the long-standing Confucian idea of *jiaohua* (transformation of customs through education) or *jiaoyang* 教養 (teaching and cultivation of the people), the Qing civilizing mission entailed the chastisement, regulation, and transformation of the values and practices of the people, so as to make them loyal imperial subjects.⁴ Christians, in the emperor's eyes, could not be loyal subjects, as he famously told court missionaries during an audience on July 1, 1724:

During the reign of my father, you built churches in all provinces, and you have rapidly expanded. I saw it, but I did not dare to say anything. But if you have been able to deceive my father, do not hope to do the same with me. You want all the Chinese to become Christians. I know well that this is something required by your religion. But if that happens, what will we become? The subjects of your kings? Your Christians only recognize you, and in time of trouble they will listen only to your voice. I know well that there is nothing to fear now. But

4. On policies toward Christianity at the time of Yongzheng's accession, see Menegon 1996; see also HCC, 521. On João Mourão, see D'Elia 1963. For Manchu-language memorials on conversions in the capital, see YZM, vol. 1, no. 59, 30–31, YZ 1.2.10 (Mar. 16, 1723); vol. 1, no. 627, 334, YZ 1.9.12 (Oct. 10, 1723); vol. 1, no. 875, 488, YZ 1.11.8 (Dec. 5, 1723). On the Qing "civilizing mission," see Theiss 2004, 35–37.

when more and more boats come from your countries, then there could be disorders.⁵

In the emperor's eyes, Christians and missionaries were a potential fifth column, and their heterodox teachings were polluting local customs, particularly the celebration of ancestral rituals and the proper station of women in society. Moreover, as governors from coastal provinces warned, control of oceanic borders and the foreign presence in Macau, Guangzhou, and the other ports was a strategic priority. A Manchu-language memorial, spelling out in detail the new policy on Christianity, presented to the emperor by a Manchu official in the Board of Rites over a year before the 1724 audience had triggered the campaign. It identified the neglect of ancestors and family and the organization of religious networks outside government control as the most dangerous heterodox and treasonous acts of the Christians:

[Commoners and prominent people alike] who join these teachings *neglect completely their parents, brothers, wives, and daughters, and respect only the Lord of Heaven*. In great numbers they are given printed symbols of the Lord of Heaven to paste on their doors, and this is truly a *treasonous and heterodox act* of great gravity. Without any previous relationship, and without an apparent reason, they distribute money to people, trapping their minds, and they certainly must have some [secret] intention. If we do not forbid [those teachings], they will spread everywhere. Now, in the compilation offices for the imperial calendar, we still need these [Western] people, and thus they should be allowed to continue their service. However, with the exclusion of their servants and cooks, no Manchu, Mongol, Chinese bannermen (*hanjun* 漢軍) or Chinese, including also the bondservants (*booyi*) and slaves, should be allowed to come and go [from and to their quarters]. Officials and soldiers should be sent to the places where the Westerners live in the capital to exert surveillance over them, and in

5. *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 1875–77, 3: 364. The emperor uttered these sentences during a fifteen-minute speech in a private audience with the Jesuits Ignatius Kögler, Dominique Parennin, and Joachim Bouvet. The three missionaries must have made a transcript of the speech from memory immediately after the audience, following the emperor's order to report his words to all their confreres. The speech was a direct response to a memorial by Kögler asking for a reprieve in the imperial order of expulsion of missionaries (for the Chinese original with an imperial vermilion rescript, dated YZ 2.5.11 [July 1, 1724], see QTS, vol. 1, doc. 43; a copy also in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 179, ff. 303r–v, without rescript and with a relevant imperial edict instead; cf. D'Elia 1963, photograph 9).

the provinces local military and civil officials should be given orders to enforce the [full] prohibition.⁶ (*Italics added*)

Although for the most part the memorial concerned the conversion of bannermen and citizens in the capital and the retention of useful European advisors and technicians at court, it also underlined the damage to orthodox customs Christian teachings provoked in faraway provinces like Fujian. Revealingly, two other items discussed further on in the same memorial were closely linked to border defense and ritual propriety in areas where many Christians were known to live. The memorial emphasized the need to select good men for border defense, both along the coast and in Central Asia; the need to regulate clothing and ritual practices at weddings and funerals for people employed as lower government employees (militia, yamen runners, household slaves) was also noted. Apparently, Christian activities in coastal provinces like Fujian, with the enduring participation of foreign missionaries and merchants, were understood as related to the larger issues of border defense and ritual propriety. State concerns for military security and the “civilizing mission” framed the outlawing of Christianity, and the recommendation of the Board of Rites left no doubt that local military and civil officials in the provinces had to act swiftly. This memorial set in motion an empire-wide anti-Christian campaign of the sort not seen since the 1660s.

It was perhaps only chance, however, that the first Christian community in the empire to receive governmental attention was Fuan. In mid-June 1723, following intelligence tips, Governor-General Gioro Mamboo notified Fuan County Magistrate Fu Zhi 傅直 of his “discovery” of Christians in Fuan. Given the long history of official monitoring of Fujian Christians, Mamboo’s “discovery” was obviously no discovery. As we have seen, already in 1709 Zhang Boxing had drafted a memorial on Christian activities in the province, and Mamboo had access to the archives where such files could be checked. His long tenures in Fujian (1711–15 as governor of Fujian and 1715–25 as governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian) put him in a delicate spot: he needed to show particular zeal in implementing the new imperial directives, lest he be considered negligent for having tolerated Christian activities that his predecessor Zhang Boxing had censored.⁷

6. YZM, vol. 1, no. 59, dated YZ 1.2.10 (Mar. 16, 1723), 30–31.

7. Fu Lo-shu (1966, 505) suggests that Gioro Mamboo may have been inspired to initiate the campaign by Zhang’s 1709 draft memorial. In fact, Zhang Pengge’s

Mamboo's anti-Christian diligence in Fujian had also much to do with the delicate situation he found himself in with the accession of Yongzheng. The Manchu aristocrat had maintained close relations with Yongzheng for a number of years and supplied him with funds when he was only one of the heirs presumptive. But Mamboo also played an active part in the factional politics of the late Kangxi period, engaging in double-dealings and intelligence gathering in order to maintain his influence. This closeness to the imperial house and the court proved dangerous after the death of Kangxi, when Mamboo became a target in the cleanup spearheaded by the new monarch against the old factional bureaucratic underworld. In 1724, the emperor deprived Mamboo of the power to write palace memorials after he was allegedly discovered using acquaintances in Beijing to gather information about court affairs and to obtain access to secret reports. Mamboo's attempts at bribing the imperial henchmen Lungkodo (Long-ke-duo 隆科多) and Nian Gengyao 年羹尧 with a large quantity of gold to regain favor further aggravated his situation, and even Mamboo's death in 1725 did not stop a public attack against his memory, carried on in 1727 by his successor in the post of governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian.⁸

1723 memorials, and quite possibly also Zhang Boxing's influence as the new president of the Board of Rites, resulted in the issuance of the Manchu memorial of March 1723, which in turn sparked reactions in the provinces. The memorial contained a clear directive to provincial officials to enforce the prohibition of Christianity. In all likelihood, this directive reached Fujian in the late spring of 1723 and prompted the quick reaction of Gioro Mamboo in the summer. The anti-Christian recommendation of Gioro Mamboo to the Board of Rites is dated YZ 1.10.24 (Nov. 21, 1723); see QTS, vol. 1, doc. 41, 56. The board soon approved Mamboo's memorial (received on YZ 1.12.5 [Dec. 31, 1723]), and an imperial decree ordering the gradual expulsion of the missionaries from China, except in the capital, quickly followed on YZ 1.12.17 (Jan. 12, 1724).

8. Gioro Mamboo was a personal retainer of the Yongzheng emperor, a member of the Gioro clan and of the Plain Yellow Banner, to which also the emperor, as Prince Yinzen 胤禛, was attached. The future emperor had bestowed gifts on Gioro Mamboo in 1717, while he was Fujian-Zhejiang governor-general, probably in exchange for financial support; see ECCP, 655a; and *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 1980, 4: 3252–53, 2: 1382, 1569, 934. For Gioro Mamboo's biography, see Wu Zhongkuang 1991, 1: 621–26; *Qingdai renwu zhuan gao* 1994, *shang bian*, 7: 81–85; and Silas Wu 1979, 170. A series of memorials by the next governor-general attacking Gioro Mamboo can be found in YZH, vol. 8, nos. 493–505, 682–96, YZ 4.12.21 (Jan. 12, 1727).

The fact that repression of Christianity in the Yongzheng period began in Fuan was mainly due to political factors linked to the career of Mamboo and his dabblings in court politics. This extra-local factor, in combination with Yongzheng's hostility to Christian influence at the court of his father and the long-standing anti-heterodox stance of senior officials in the central government, produced an explosive mix that initiated the campaign. Although the emperor in one instance expressed concern for local order in Fujian—more of an afterthought to justify his actions than a real issue—provincial officials never reported disorders in Mindong or elsewhere in the province prior to receiving orders from Beijing.⁹

Extant memorials show that during the Yongzheng reign, Fujian (in 1724, 1729, and 1733–34), Guangdong (1725 and 1732), and the capital (1723) remained the targets of strict monitoring, although isolated anti-Christian actions were taken in Shandong (1729) and Zhejiang (1730). Yongzheng and his high officials continued to perceive Christianity as a problem of national rather than merely local import, as attested by the language used in a secret court letter directed to all provincial governors in 1729. In the letter, the emperor lamented the negligence of provincial authorities in checking Catholic activities, already forbidden for several years, and the fact that foreign missionaries were still living in the provinces and that “local rascals” (*bendi wulai zhi ren* 本地無賴之人) were following their teachings, thereby damaging customs (*fengsu* 風俗). Yongzheng's court letter shows the burning

9. In a vermilion rescript jotted on the memorial that the Jesuit Ignatius Kögler, head of the Directorate of Astronomy, had written to delay immediate deportation of the missionaries, the Yongzheng emperor observed that his order to deport all missionaries to Macau stemmed from the fact that “in Fujian province there are Westerners who stir trouble and entice crowds at the local level” (福建省住居西洋人在地方生事惑眾); see YZH, vol. 3, doc. 22, 26; and QTS, vol. 1, doc. 43, 59. I would argue that these words were a retroactive justification written after reading Gioro Mamboo's reports, rather than the real explanation for the initial imperial orders to ban Christianity. The emperor quoted his concern for the opinion (*yulun* 輿論) of his “high officials in charge of the borders” as the main cause for his decision. These officials were preoccupied with foreign encroachment on the coast, with illegal smuggling of rice abroad, and with the decay of local orthodox mores. This confirms that central and provincial high officials and the emperor himself, not lower-ranking officials at the local level, or a situation of local disorder in Mindong, were the roots of the anti-Christian campaign in Fujian. For a general assessment of the Yongzheng anti-Christian policies, see Zhuang 1981, 33–35.

concern of the central government with local stability as represented by orthodox “customs.” This was the kind of rhetoric that the Qing civilizing mission used in order to stamp out what Kangxi had seen as acceptable local eccentricities, but his son Yongzheng and grandson Qianlong saw instead as roadblocks on the way to an orderly empire. But the state’s ensuing measures to protect “customs” produced a contrary effect, engendering social tension where a *status quo* of local social harmony had existed for some time. As it turned out, local people were quite willing to stick to their Christian teachings in the face of imperial prohibitions.¹⁰

Suppression Breeds Resistance

Central government policy had little to do with local social conditions or with the internal development of the Christian communities in Mindong. In the wake of the orders from Fuzhou and under strong pressure from the governor-general, the local magistrate ordered his subordinates to inventory church properties, had proclamations forbidding Christianity pasted in public places, confiscated the building materials for the church under construction in Fuan, told local Christians to apostatize and Christian virgins to get married, and issued arrest warrants for the Dominicans. With the permission of the authorities, non-Christian villagers were encouraged to take over church properties and transform them into public schools or ancestral halls, and county policemen physically attacked Christians. Several Christian families decided to escape to the mountains to avoid the violence, and other ones hid the missionaries in their homes or in the countryside and for several years thereafter shielded them from authorities. Religious activities were badly disrupted and continued only in secrecy and at night.¹¹

10. On Yongzheng era’s anti-Christian campaigns, see Groot 1903 and Fu 1966, *passim*, as well as a number of memorials in Beijing (published in QTS) and in Taipei. See a transcript of the archival version of the 1729 court letter in Zhuang 1981, 34; cf. also the published version from *Yongzheng zhupi yuzhi* 雍正硃批諭旨 as quoted in Zhang Li and Liu Jiantang 1987, 175.

11. On the government measures taken in 1724 against Christian activities in Fuan, see several Chinese-language memorials by the local magistrate, including lists of churches, in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 316 (8, docs. f-i); cf. GH, 2: 159–67. Besides the copies at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, several archival versions of these and other memorials related to the 1724 campaign in Fujian also exist in ARSI and APSR and have been partly published in YQTW, 19–26 (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana and ARSI copies). French translations of several of

The initial resistance to the new imperial orders, however, shows that by the late Kangxi period Christianity in Fuan had become rather deeply integrated within local society. The new stance of the state seemed unfair and unreasonable to many locals, who had become accustomed to their rituals and activities and reacted with protest to the intrusion. The first signs of resistance to the Yongzheng policies came from a handful of converted literati. The county magistrate complained to his superiors that local Christians had attached an offensive leaflet to the official proclamations posted in Fuan, and that even one of his own yamen clerks (*liyuan* 吏員), Tomás Guo Xianjun 郭顯均, together with the *shengyuan* Benito Wu Wenyao 吳文耀, had dared to reply to his questioning by saying: “The Lord of Heaven is the master of all things. Who would dare not to respect and honor him?” Soon thereafter, the community of Fuan deputed four Christian literati (Tomás Miao Tianlin 繆天麟, Pablo Zhao Wenchou 趙文綢, Domingo Guo Yuxuan 郭于宣, and Domingo Chen Chou 陳紬) to present a petition to the governor-general in defense of Christianity. This daring action earned the men the ire of Mambo, who had them arrested while in Fuzhou. During interrogations, the tribunal clerk wrote, on his own initiative, that the arrested had agreed to renounce Christianity. Chen Chou immediately reacted, asking that this false statement be struck from the record. A superior official intervened and had them sign an ambiguous statement that they were “ready to follow what is right (ie., *zheng* 正) and abandon what is heterodox (ie., *xie* 邪).” Interpreting this statement as favoring Christianity, which they in no way saw as heterodox, the prisoners agreed to the “confession” and were released. Once back in Fuan, they avoided the orders of the local magistrate to participate in sacrificial ceremonies to Confucius by paying a large sum as a bribe. Other local Christian men were obliged to participate in the worship of the city god to prove their loyalty to the state. Some paid fines to be excused, but those who could not afford the expense were forced by caning to kneel to the god’s statue.¹²

these pieces can be found in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 1875–77, 3: 346–66 (for an English rendering, see Marinescu 2008, 270–301).

12. On the resistance offered by Guo and Wu, see Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 316 (8-g), and YQTW, doc. 1.3, 21. Wu Wenyao is called “Ou Ou-entcho” in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 1875–77, 3: 348, corresponding to Wu Wenzhuo 吳文擢; this latter is probably a mistaken character, as Dominican sources penned in Fuan itself call him “Vun-yao” (ie., Wenyao); see GH, 2: 161–62.

The figure of Chen Chou is particularly interesting because he exemplifies the persistence and tenacity of local Christians over the course of the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns. Chen was a *shengyuan* from Muyang, who was baptized in his twenties in 1693. After his arrest in 1723, Chen, by then a family man in his mid-fifties, continued to be a fervent Christian and worked as a catechist. In 1729, Fujian Governor Liu Shiming 劉世明 had Chen imprisoned again for his Christian activities. He was later released but remained undaunted in his beliefs and activities, and in 1730 he illegally harbored the newly arrived missionary Juan Alcober (1694–1748) in his house. Chen was arrested again in 1733 but was released in 1736 on the occasion of an amnesty marking the accession of the Qianlong emperor. He must have continued his religious activities in earnest, since he was captured in 1746 and singled out as one of the Christian ringleaders of Muyang. Authorities in 1746 were incredulous at his persistence: “It would be bad enough if you were a commoner, but you are a *shengyuan*, and of course you have read books and understand principles. How could you remain unruffled?” The response of the 75-year-old Chen was defiant: “The principles of the Lord of Heaven are even stronger than those of Confucius (*Tianzhu de daoli bi Kongsheng hai qiang* 天主的道理比孔聖還強). I have been following these teachings all my life without changing my mind, and I will not abjure my ideas.”¹³

Not all Christians proved equally steadfast. In 1729 and 1733, during the anti-Christian raids in Fuan, for example, many converts hid Christian symbols and buried liturgical implements. But a number of Christians, especially women, took great risks in sheltering the foreign missionaries in their houses, a practice that continued until the nineteenth century. So effective were their efforts that Governor Liu Shiming reported in 1730 to the emperor that “to the best of my knowl-

On the arrest of the four literati in Fuzhou, see memorial in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 316 (8-m, f. 2r); cf. GH, 2: 167–70.

13. The confession of Chen to provincial authorities in 1746 is found in AMEP, vol. 435, f. 1021, and vol. 436, ff. 140–139 [sic] (YQTW, doc. 33, 116–17; and doc. 34, 138). Chen’s name at birth was Chen Wenlong 陳文龍; his Christian name was Domingo, Zhuo-ming-wo 卓明我. He was born ca. 1671 and died after 1746. Data on Chen Chou come from QTS, vol. 1, doc. 56, 79, and doc. 59, 91; AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 769–72 (YQTW, doc. 29); AMEP, vol. 435, ff. 1022, 1112 (YQTW, doc. 33); AMEP, vol. 436, f. 140 (YQTW, doc. 34); Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 316 (8-m), f. 2r; GH, 2: 196, 350; GM, 1: 123.

edge there is no one who acts as leader and controls the adherents of these teachings.”¹⁴

An important consequence of the anti-Christian campaigns of the Yongzheng period was the Dominican decision to open the priesthood to native Fujianese. To that end, at the suggestion of Pedro Sanz (1680–1747), the vicar apostolic of Fujian, the Provincial Council of the Dominicans in the Philippines decided in 1732 to admit immediately two or three Chinese novices to the Colegio de Santo Tomás in Manila. Before this date only one Chinese Dominican, the Fuan native Gregorio Luo Wenzao, had been ordained in Manila, in 1654. Luo eventually became the first native bishop, in the diocese of Nanjing, in 1685. In general, missionaries in China resisted the ordination of native clergy either because of racial prejudice or because the Chinese faced linguistic difficulties in mastering Latin and theology as effectively as Europeans. As a result, until the mid-eighteenth century there were few Chinese priests in China. The situation changed partly thanks to the attitude of the Missions Étrangères de Paris and other congregations in favor of a native clergy and to the Qing suppression of Christianity, as it happened in Mindong. Native ordinations became a necessity so that, if all foreign missionaries were expelled from Mindong, the mission would not disintegrate. In 1736, the first Chinese novice, Juan Feng Shiming 馮世明 (zi Wenzhi 文子, 1719–55), who hailed from the village of Sangyang near Fuan and later became better known as Juan Bautista Fung de Santa Maria, was admitted to the College of San Juan de Letrán in Manila. By 1738, the Spanish governor-general of the Philippines had endowed six royal fellowships of 100 pesos each to cover the educational and living expenses of Dominican novices from China. Fuan and Zhangzhou continued to supply a number of Chinese students over the years: most traveled to Manila for training, but a few studied as far as the Collegio de' Cinesi (Chinese college) in Naples, Italy. Against the government's plans, the imperial suppression thus provoked an even more tenacious localization of Christianity and produced, as a side-effect, the first group of Fujianese native priests.¹⁵

14. See a letter by Alcober in GH, 2: 204–5; memorial by Liu Shiming, YZ 8.2.3 (Mar. 21, 1730) in YZH, 17: 845.

15. On admission of novices in Manila, see GH, 2: 262–64; on Chinese clergy in Fujian, see HCC, 465–66; on the attitude of the Dominicans in the Philippines to native vocations in Asia (preclusion to Philippine *indios*, but not prejudicial opposition to Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese novices), see Rosa 1990, 77–92. Among

*The 1746 Anti-Christian Campaign in the Qianlong Reign
(1736–96): From Mindong to the Whole Empire*

The empire-wide repression that started in the Yongzheng reign obliged missionaries and Christians to reorganize their communitarian life. No longer in a position to congregate in the churches now confiscated by order of the authorities, Fuan Christians could not celebrate rituals together. Instead, they met and prayed in smaller groups in the houses of lay leaders or family members. Missionaries lost their residences and received hospitality in Christian homes. European priests, whose looks gave away their identity, had to live in secret chambers, and occasionally even in underground pits with little space and light. Their hosts provided all their daily necessities and food. To avoid detection, priests traveled after sunset to visit families and administer the sacraments and conducted communal rituals mostly at night. The level of secrecy varied according to circumstance, reaching the highest levels during state campaigns but relaxing when local magistrates turned a blind eye to the missionary presence and Christian activities. For example, in the initial decade of his reign (1735–46), the Qianlong emperor launched no large-scale campaigns against Christianity, even though he did not reverse the hostile decrees of his father. This was a quiet period empire-wide and in Mindong. In 1738, Bishop Sanz observed that “although the mandarins know very well that we [missionaries] are residing here [in the territory of Fuan], when they discover it, they dissimulate, since no orders come from the [imperial] court. Thus we can in the meantime engage in our usual business of the *hing-kiao* (*xingjiao* 行教, “proselytize”), albeit always with appropriate caution and prudence.” Sanz’s perception is corroborated by the lack of any record of official actions against Christianity in Fujian between 1734 and 1746. In that period, at

the Fujianese priests trained in Naples is, for example, Pablo Cai Wenan 蔡文安 (1720–82), a native of Longxi 龍溪 county near Zhangzhou, who was sent by Vicar Apostolic Sanz to the Collegio de’ Cinesi of Naples in 1739, was ordained as a priest of Propaganda Fide in 1748, and returned to Fujian in 1751; see GH, 2: 265n23; GM, 2: 80–81; Lin Jinshui and Xie Bizhen 1997, 311. His brother Pedro Cai Ruoxiang 蔡若祥 (1739–1806) followed him to Naples later and returned to China in 1768, becoming a sort of celebrity during the 1784–85 anti-Christian campaign for his escape to India and Southeast Asia through Macau, and back; on his life, see Menegon 2006b; on other Fujianese in Naples, see Fatica 1996.

least seven magistrates held tenure in Fuan, and none denounced the Christians. An additional factor contributing to the relative peace enjoyed by the Christians in Fujian was the covert protection granted by Joseph Aisin Gioro Depei (德沛, 1688–1752), a member of the Imperial Household and a crypto-Christian. Depei was governor-general of Zhejiang and Fujian from 1739 to 1742. During Depei's tenure, Eusebio Oscot could openly celebrate mass in Muyang on Christmas Eve "with more than four hundred Christians gathered in the courtyard of my patron, a literatus called Domingo [probably Domingo Chen Chou]." County civil officials were ignoring Christian activities. There were two main reasons for this "negligence": first, the local magistrates were wary of denouncing the presence of missionaries to their superiors for fear of demotion and further trouble; second, some yamen runners and military personnel, as well as a considerable number of local residents, were Christians. Even if the magistrate knew about their beliefs, he would have accomplished little by alienating his own staff and by upsetting local order with a suppression campaign. The deep ties that the Christian community had by now developed with local society acted as a shield against the threat of the central state.¹⁶

Pedro Sanz, relying on what Christians had experienced during the Yongzheng period, surmised that only direct orders from the "imperial court" in Beijing could initiate local campaigns. He was only partly right. In 1746, chance ignited the first spark of a new campaign in Mindong and ended the truce of the Qianlong reign. A subordinate of an officer of the Army of the Green Standard stationed in Fuan attempted to extort money from Sanz's Christian servant (*casero*) in exchange for

16. For a summary of the early Qianlong situation, see Krahll 1964, 8–15. Incidents in the early Qianlong period arose only in the capital. In 1737, a Christian baptizing moribund infants in the streets of Beijing was arrested and punished; see Zhang Ze 1992, 120–21; Laamann 2000, 203; and Marinescu 2008, 246–53. In 1738, three years after his accession, Qianlong prohibited members of the Eight Banners from converting to Christianity and launched a campaign in Beijing. However, an empire-wide campaign was implemented only in 1746; see Groot 1903, 277. Quotations from letter by Sanz to the Propaganda Fide procurator in Macau, Arcangelo Miralta, Muyang, November 3, 1738, in GM, 2: 38; and from letter by Eusebio Oscot to Juan de Archedera dated January 12, 1741, APSR, *China*, vol. 14, f. 80v. In the same letter, Oscot also observed regarding Depei that "he has already come to this province of Fujian, and under the shadow of this prince José we can preach the Gospel with a little bit more freedom." On Depei, see Chen Yuan 1932; ECCP, 714–15; Fang Hao 1988, 3: 66–70; Krahll 1964, 15–16; and HCC, 446–47.

his silence on the foreigner's presence. The servant, however, rebuffed the blackmailer, who then denounced the presence of the missionary to his superior, Brigade Commander Luo Yingling 羅應麟. Bypassing the local civil magistrate Zhou Bingguan 周秉官, whom he disliked for personal reasons, Luo instead notified the prefect of Funing, Dong Qizuo 董啓祚, during a routine tour of inspection of local granaries, of the presence of the missionaries. Magistrate Zhou had been posted at Fuan for at least two years, and it is unlikely that he was unaware of Christian activities and the missionary presence. He had probably decided to keep quiet about the matter. He paid for his leniency by being removed from his post and demoted following the official discovery of the foreigners. But what his superiors saw as negligence, locals may have seen as good governance, since the local gazetteer later praised Zhou as "merciful and concerned about the people" in spite of the abrupt and disgraceful end of his tenure. A personal spat that could have been avoided with adequate bribes spiraled out of control and into the hands of outsiders. Once again the Christians in Fuan attracted the attention of ambitious high officials who represented the agenda of the central state and for whom adherence to the "civilizing" project of the dynasty meant career advancement.¹⁷

In his initial report to the governor, Prefect Dong Qizuo reported that disrespect for the social structures of patriarchy and for its rituals were the most heinous crimes of the Christians. The first crime mentioned was the thriving "wicked custom (*efeng* 惡風) of women preserv-

17. Luo Yinglin was not a local man, but a native of Minxian 閩縣, and thus he had no personal ties to local Christians. He was stationed in Fuan as brigade commander (*youji* 遊擊) of the Left Battalion of the Funing Garrison; see FAXZ, 278; QTS, vol. 1, doc. 56, 80; GH, 2: 314; and GM, 1: 336–37. Funing was the seat of five battalions of land troops, under the control of the provincial military commander of the Land Forces (*lulu tidu* 陸路提督), headquartered in Quanzhou, and one battalion of naval troops, under the command of the provincial military commander of the Naval Forces (*shuishi tidu* 水師提督), headquartered in Xiamen; see *Fujian haifang shi* 1990, 171; *Ningde diqu zhi* 1998, 1166; and Miao Pinmei 1999, 105–7. Zhou Bingguan was a native of Wuling 武陵 (Huguang) and a holder of a *ba-gongsheng* degree; on Zhou, see FAXZ, 263; and QTS, vol. 1, doc. 56, 82, and doc. 59, 92. A reference to the memorial on the impeachment of Zhou can be found in AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 897–98 (YQTW, 71). In the memorial, Governor-General Martai and Governor Zhou Xuejian asked for the cashiering of Zhou for negligence and his replacement with Du Zhong, magistrate of Jiangle 將樂 county for two years, who was praised for knowing Fujianese customs well.

ing their virginity (*shou tongshen* 守童身),” a clear breach of proper human relations. Next he brought up the Christian neglect of the ancestors and the gods. Neglect of the ancestors was a result of converts’ “considering their parents as mere vessels for birth, and the foreigners as their ‘great fathers’ (*da fu* 大父).” Lineages had failed in their responsibility to inculcate filial values. The role of “parent,” usually reserved for one’s elders and state officials (also called “parent-officials,” *fumu guan* 父母官), had been usurped by the foreign “spiritual fathers” (*shenfu* 神父). The local lineages’ loss of social control stood out as a main complaint in several official memorials written at the onset of the 1746 anti-Christian campaign. As scholars have noted, blaming lineages for the decline of customs became commonplace in official discourse during the Qianlong reign. Imperial mistrust of the mediating power of family and community as enforcers of local order stemmed from fears of vigilante violence and blood feuds, so common in the south. As a result, although in principle deferring the local portion of the *jiaohua* project to lineage leaders and *baojia* units, the Qing state granted itself the power to punish crimes and regulate local customs. An unintended consequence of this policy was the secrecy with which lineages shielded their internal affairs, especially those deemed disgraceful or irregular, from the inquisitorial gaze of the state. Fuan’s lineages appear to have been frequent practitioners of this form of obfuscation. Officials feared that Fuan’s local elders, entrusted with forcing Christian virgins to marry, would “keep the situation secret by way of bribery,” as they had often done in the past. Lineages had long been complicit with Christians. Even though in 1723 and again in 1729, the Fujian governors had exacted written sworn renunciations of Christianity from converted gentry, had filed these statements in the archives for reference, and had ordered the lineage elders to ensure that former Christians hewed to orthodoxy, Christian activities had continued unabated, the memorials lamented.¹⁸

18. Quotations from Dong Qizuo are from AMEP, vol. 434, f. 893 (YQTW, 60–62). On Qianlong-period official mistrust of lineages, see Theiss 2004, 67–81. The recommendation of forced marriage is found in a document issued by the Xinghua prefect in response to a request from the provincial surveillance commissioner on the Fuan case, QL 11/5/10 (June 28, 1746), AMEP, vol. 434, f. 1094 (YQTW, 63–64). That such forced marriages failed is shown, for example, by the fact that in the 1770s some Christian virgins bought the silence of the yamen runners and the *baojia* leaders (*cabecillas*) by paying bribes (*chapecas*, i.e., coins), so that “up to now no

The 1746 campaign was conducted with great energy and ended in the arrest of five Spanish missionaries, including the vicar apostolic of Fujian, and several Christian leaders. Over the next two years, these men and a few *beatas* underwent interrogations and suffered torture and penal exile. The foreign priests, after lengthy procedural discussions within the Qing bureaucracy and legal system, were either strangled or decapitated. Moreover, the incident in Fuan escalated to an empire-wide anti-Christian campaign that lasted into 1748. The urgency and momentum with which provincial officials acted in Mindong had to do with two extra-local factors: bureaucratic infighting and the implementation of a larger anti-heterodoxy campaign in central and southern China. Tensions in the bureaucratic chain of command can be detected in the extant documents on the campaign. After Prefect Dong alerted Fujian Governor Zhou Xuejian to Christian activities, the governor became alarmed at the laxness of his own civil subordinates. His reputation with the emperor was at stake. The governor, for example, learned that county yamen employees were shielding Christians from prosecution, as we read in one report: “The followers of those teachings are a large crowd [in Fuan], and as soon as the yamen runners heard that [the missionaries] were being hunted, they cooperated in hiding them without leaving a trace.” Zhou came to distrust his civil subordinates and ordered Funing Garrison Military Commandant Li Youyong 李有用 to conduct secret investigations parallel to those of the prefect, and to monitor the measures taken by the civil officials, who were reported to be “exceedingly slow and lacking a grasp of the situation.”

The energetic response of the governor and his use of the military contrasted sharply with the inefficiency of his civil officials. Zhou's counterpart in the military hierarchy, however, the Manchu General of Fuzhou and Supervisor of Customs Sinju (Xin-zhu 新柱), did not necessarily support the governor's initiatives. Memorials from Fuzhou started reaching the emperor via two different channels: on one hand, from Governor Zhou and Governor-General Martai (Ma-er-tai 馬爾泰) in the civil administration; and on the other, from General Sinju in the military administration. The two branches of local government com-

[virgin] has ever been obliged to marry”; see GH, 2: 521. These words suggest that bribery in these cases was a recurrent practice. On the sworn statements collected by order of Governor Liu Shiming in 1729, see a Spanish translation of a lost Chinese-language memorial dated YZ 7.8.26 (Oct. 18, 1729), in GH, 2: 192–93.

peted for imperial attention, and each tried to discredit the other. Sinju, for example, in an early memorial hinted that he had learned about the presence of foreigners in Fuan through his own channels (*fengwen* 風聞), not through the Funing prefect, as Governor Zhou had reported. Whatever the case may have been, since the first full report of the Funing prefect had revealed that there were “many converts [to Christianity] among Green Standard soldiers (*yingbing* 營兵) as well as among yamen runners (*xuyi* 胥役),” each branch looked guilty. Both civil and military administrations were thus tainted with heterodoxy and with the presence of traitors (*jianmin* 奸民). High officials in both branches (also divided by ethnicity, Han vs. Manchu) had to be worried that they would be singled out as targets of attack by their opponents.¹⁹

A general rise in “sectarian” activities in the mid-1740s also alarmed the governor. Starting in 1744, and with renewed intensity in mid-1746, provincial governors discovered heterodox groups in several provinces. These repeated discoveries preoccupied Qianlong, who issued urgent orders to the governors to deal with the matter adequately and produce results. Soon, high officials started uncovering and suppressing sectarian groups in Guizhou, Sichuan, and Jiangsu. Qianlong, concerned about

19. Kutcher 1999, 188, observes that “throughout his meteoric climb, Zhou Xuejian had been personally favored by Qianlong.” Zhou Xuejian achieved the *jinshi* degree in 1723. Showing literary promise, he was appointed a bachelor in the Hanlin Academy, where he progressed with distinction. After working in the Board of Revenue and in various posts in disaster relief (Shandong, and then in the upper and lower Yangzi), he became acting governor of Fujian and then Fujian-Zhejiang governor-general. At this time he was awarded the prestigious title of junior guardian of the heir apparent and was appointed one of the three directors-general of the Grand Canal. The fate that befell Zhou Xuejian at the end of his career, however, reveals that tension between Han and Manchu officials was rife, and that it likely played a role in the Fuan case as well. Zhou was one of the highest officials to die in the wake of the “shaving scandal” of 1748. His crime was to shave his hair before the end of the mourning period for the imperial consort Xiaoxian 孝獻. Interestingly, the man who first accused him in front of the emperor was General Sinju; see Kutcher 1999, 170–71. Quotations and information here are from QTS, vol. 1, doc. 75, 115–21; memorial of Governor Zhou Xuejian, quoting a report by Funing Garrison Commandant Li Youyong, QTS, vol. 1, doc. 64, 99–100, QL 11/7/28 (Sept. 13, 1746); memorial by Sinju, QTS, vol. 1, doc. 57, 82–84, QL 11/5/24 (July 12, 1746); report of Funing Prefect Dong Qizuo to the “postal intendant” of Fujian, identical to that sent to the governor, dated QL 11/4/29 (June 27, 1746), Chinese text in AMEP, vol. 434, f. 893 (YQTW, 60–62); see a Spanish version of a Latin translation kept in APSR in Arias 1893, 475–78; GM, 1: 473–75; and GH, 2: 315–17.

the numerous reports of heterodox activities, issued rescripts and edicts calling for heightened vigilance and severity. When in May–June 1746 the prefect of Funing discovered the Christians, he was working in an atmosphere of witch-hunting. His superior, Zhou Xuejian, who was reaching the peak of a meteoric career, was particularly eager to please the emperor. Displaying an unusual degree of zealotry, Zhou asked for authorization to execute the missionaries, despite two contrary rulings by the Grand Council backed by the emperor, who wished merely their expulsion to Macau.²⁰

Governor Zhou's rationale for his severity was that, unlike other easily dispersed native sectarian groups, the leaders of the Christians were foreigners with "unfathomable" and secret destabilizing plans, who had cast a spell over their converts, so much so that they could order them to do anything they wished. In Zhou's words,

The Teachings of the Lord of Heaven . . . are absolutely incomparable [to previous teachings]. From antiquity up to now, for example, the Dharma of the Buddha and the Teachings of the Dao have been spreading in China, but [followers of those teachings] have never gone beyond diffusing their scriptures, charms, talismans, or dharma techniques, and having people believe in those things. They never went everywhere proselytizing, attracting men and women, old and young, having them steadfastly convert, and thus becoming forever mired in their teachings. However, the Western Teachings of the Lord of Heaven have as their main aim to enslave people's minds, and their heterodox theories . . . are focused mainly on making people single-mindedly serve the Lord of Heaven, neglecting their parents, without fear to jump in fire or water. . . . Mother and daughter, wife and concubine, and the whole family worship without the least doubt, and from childhood to old age they serve [the missionaries] and never repent or get tired of doing that.²¹

20. Particularly active at the time of this campaign were the Great Vehicle Teachings (Dacheng jiao 大乘教), the Hongyang Teachings (Hongyang jiao 宏陽教) and the Laoguan zhaijiao Teachings (Laoguan zhaijiao 老官齋教). As mentioned above, the Laoguan zhaijiao groups rose in rebellion in Jianning county, and one of the captured Dominican missionaries in fact shared a prison cell with some sect members in 1748; see Francisco Serrano's report "Rebelión de Kien-ning-fu," 1748?, in GM, 2: 250–52. On the political economy favoring the rise of sectarian activities, see Gao and Chen 1986, 451–52; and Zhuang 1994, 79–94. On empire-wide anti-Christian campaigns, see Wu Min 1998; and Ma Zhao 1999 and 2002. For cases involving sectarian "societies" (*hui* 會) at this juncture, see the table in Zhuang 1994, 48–49; on *hui*, see also Ownby 1996.

21. QTS, vol. 1, doc. 58, 87, QL 11/5/28 (July 16, 1746).

In October 1746, Zhou compiled a lengthy and more analytical memorial, listing four main reasons to justify the execution of the foreign missionaries: first, Qing laws stipulated the death penalty for the crime of spreading heterodoxy among the people, and such laws applied also to foreigners; second, Christianity had been forbidden since the Yongzheng era, and thus the foreigners' infiltration into China was a premeditated, illegal criminal activity; third, only an exemplary punishment could deter other missionaries from entering China in the future; and fourth, if the government showed leniency to the foreign leaders of the Christian groups and simply sent them back to Macau as had been done in the past, their Chinese followers would become convinced that they could disobey the anti-Christian decrees without consequences. In response to this strongly worded memorial, the emperor, albeit with some hesitation, finally agreed to Zhou's request. This was the first time in the history of late imperial China that such a request was approved, an unprecedented break with the Confucian principle of "cherishing men from afar."²²

In sum, a number of political and bureaucratic factors played a role in the 1746 Fuan case, but none had to do with the local situation. In fact, the campaign revealed to authorities the influence of Christianity in Fuan and how much a part of the local landscape and local customs it had become. All levels of local society were involved. Governor Zhou, for example, observed that, due to their appearances, Western missionaries should have been an easy target for arrest. But because members of the gentry, commoners, and yamen runners (*shi*, *shu*, *yayi* 士, 庶, 衙役)

22. For an overview of Qianlong-era anti-Christian campaigns, see Ma Zhao 1998 and 2002. A missionary view of the 1746 campaign is found in Krahll 1964, 10–11, based on *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 1875–77. The Grand Council deliberations on the case in response to the initial memorials of Zhou, dated QL 11/7/16 (Aug. 12, 1746) and QL 11/7/16 (Sept. 1, 1746), are recorded in the *Veritable Records of Gaozong* and translated in Fu 1966, 178–79; the complete texts of the original court letters can be found in First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, Grand Council Archives, *Court Letters* (*Jixin dang* 寄信檔), no. 1539, under QL 11/6/26; and First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, Grand Council Archives, *Deliberations* (*Yifu dang* 議復檔), under QL 11/7/16. Governor Zhou's final memorial, in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 75, 115–21, written in response to the second court letter, and dated QL 11/9/12 (Oct. 26, 1746), elicited this imperial vermilion rescript (121): "What you have memorialized is certainly exaggerated. Still we should sentence them according to the statutes."

were Christian, there was no hope of easily capturing the foreigners. As a memorial denounced,

Throughout the county [of Fuan], gentry, commoners, and yamen runners do not fear the imperial laws, and they would rather sacrifice their life to follow the heterodox religion and the foreigners. . . . The secretaries and yamen runners of that county are mostly converts, and this is the reason why, when we were conducting our investigations, they tried all they could to spread the news, and thus it was impossible to get any truthful confession.²³

These local alliances had discouraged the governor from relying on lineages and *baojia* units for enforcement of local control during his hunt for the missionaries. Zhou instead sent a detachment of soldiers, and the county magistrate gathered another hundred militia men to surround the houses of the Christian leaders, where the foreigners were thought to be living. In Muyang, a confrontation with local people subsequently broke out. According to imperial reports,

When the crowd and the women, together with the Westerner [Juan Alcober], learned that they were going to be arrested, they resisted and fought back. [The squadron leader] proceeded to arrest them by force but was surrounded, beaten, and wounded. Then [the assistant brigade commander] quickly reached Muyang to rescue [the squadron leader] and arrested the Westerner, as well as [six Christian local leaders].

This account is not confirmed in Christian sources and could have been simply an inflated report of some scuffle. But it unmistakably shows signs of resistance.²⁴

The presence of troops deterred locals from reacting violently to the arrest, but despite the military intervention Christians still showed up *en masse* on July 5, 1746 (QL 11.5.17), the day the missionaries started their journey to the provincial capital for trial:

23. Quotation from QTS, vol. 1, doc. 58, 88.

24. Official memorials do not specify the number of law enforcers involved in the raids (see QTS, vol. 1, doc. 56, 79, QL 11/5/12 [June 30, 1746]: “several capable and experienced soldiers”); a Christian Chinese-language report of the arrests in Fuan gives the number of twenty soldiers and a hundred local militia men (see AMEP, vol. 434, f. 889; YQTW, doc. 37, 148); other missionary sources indicate a hundred soldiers from Fuzhou/Funing, and a hundred local militia men. On Christian resistance, see QTS, vol. 1, doc. 56, 80; and a missionary perspective of the same events in GH, 1: 326–27.

[When] the transfer of Bai Duolu 白哆祿 [i.e., Vicar Apostolic Sanz] and the other four prisoners to the provincial capital began, a crowd of over a thousand men and women gathered at the county gate to see them off. Some were embracing [them] and crying, others were giving them clothes or money, others were fanning them and pulling the sedan chairs [on which they were transported].²⁵

The authorities could not arrest over a thousand people. Thus, besides eradicating the priestly leadership, authorities decided to engage in an ideological rectification campaign of the people of Fuan by enforcing the order of the “civilizing mission.”

The State’s Confucian Response and Christian Memory Building

The execution of the missionaries and the arrest of a number of Christian leaders was only the authorities’ first step in the campaign to eradicate Christianity. They also needed to reform the minds of the several thousand converts they had discovered in Fuan. During 1748, therefore, the new acting county magistrate of Fuan, Du Zhong 杜忠, implemented a re-education campaign in the spirit of the *jiaohua* project, stating that “the main duties of whoever administers this town are to reform its customs and to rectify people’s minds.” In Dingtou, Magistrate Du discovered a group of four elderly *beatas*, all belonging to the Huang lineage. In spite of the recent crackdown on Christianity, the Huangs kept at home “[religious] books and prayer books, things of the perverse and false [Christian] law, European books, rosaries, prints, paintings” and had not turned the *beatas* over to authorities. The women were too old to be married off, and along with four of their male relatives, they were detained in the county jail.²⁶ Realizing the extent of Christianity’s penetration in certain locales of his jurisdiction, the magistrate issued a proclamation (*gaoshi* 告示) expressing concern over the obduracy of the *beatas*: “Although Christians may say [to authorities] that they wish to renounce [their religion], I do not believe them.” He ordered the destruction of all religious objects and the forced marriage of *beatas*. Finally, since he

25. See QTS, vol. 1, doc. 58, 88; and AMEP, vol. 436, f. 152 (YQTW, doc. 34, 129); a Spanish translation of this passage can be found in GM, 1: 340n1.

26. See GM, 2: 533–35, Spanish translation of Chinese document issued by Du Zhong; and GH, 2: 413–14.

believed that “the way to return to the norm starts with the espousal of learning,” he enlisted the help of local degree-holders, including a *ju ren*, to rebuild the Ziyang 紫陽 Academy (the name being a reference to Zhu Xi), by then in disrepair, and transform it into a county school for local stipend students and a bastion of orthodoxy against the “heretic teachings of the Western Ocean.” By mid-1748, the five Spanish missionaries detained in Fuzhou had been executed; three servant-catechists with their families had been banned to the region beyond the Great Wall (Fengtian 奉天); local Christians had been detained, tortured, and heavily fined; and the community had been terrorized into apparent submission. Moreover, the Confucian education of local literati had been strengthened with the reconstruction of the local academy. It looked as if Fuan and Mindong had been successfully pacified.²⁷

Government policies in fact backfired, as is often the case when martyrs are created by state power. The confession of Lucas Guo Jinren 郭近人 (ca. 1688–ca. 1751), a Dominican Tertiary arrested in 1746, reveals the systemic nature of the passive resistance to authority offered by Fuan Christians: “I follow the Teachings, and my parents, brothers, wife, and friends still cultivate them. We [Christians] externally respect the Chinese legal system, but in our hearts we still believe and obey the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven, and even if punished by law, we will

27. On the arrest of the *beatas*, see GM, 2: 533–35, Spanish translation of Chinese document issued by Du Zhong; and GH, 2: 413–14. On the aftermath of the 1746 campaign in Fuan, see GH, 2: 415–16. Besides acting in Fuan, imperial authorities also made arrests and inquiries regarding the Christian Yan family in the village of Houban 后坂 (Longxi county; Zhangzhou prefecture); see, e.g., Fu 1966, 183–84, as well as a number of memorials in Taipei and Beijing. This investigation was linked to the arrival of a Spanish ship in Xiamen, headed by Captain José Pasarín, whose task was to recover the body of the decapitated Vicar Apostolic Sanz (see, e.g., Fu 1966, 183). Letters and objects were then exchanged with local Catholics, and apparently the authorities did not realize that Juan Feng Shiming, a Chinese Dominican native of Fuan returning to Fujian after training in Manila, disembarked from that ship; on him see below. Magistrate Du Zhong, a *ju ren* native of Gaotang 高唐 subprefecture in Shandong, was assigned to Fuan in mid-1746 and left it in 1748; see FAXZ, 153, 264. Quotation from the public edict posted in Fuan is from a Spanish version of the Chinese-language original (QL 13/1/1; Feb. 11, 1748), affixed at the gates of Fuan, in response to an order by the governor; see GH, 2: 412–13, quoting from Francisco Serrano, “Apendice a la relación,” 1748. Quotations by Du Zhong are from the “Inscription for the Reconstruction of the Ziyang Academy,” in FAXZ, 98. On the Qing reconstruction of academies starting in the 1730s, see Liu Haifeng and Zhuang Mingshui, 1996, 184–201; and Woodside 1990.

not dare recant!” Christian resistance, however, did not take violent forms. Instead, constructing a secret communal memory became a powerful way for the battered community to fortify its resolve against continued suppression.²⁸

The Dominican Order collected an impressive quantity of materials on the five Spanish missionaries executed in Fuzhou. Between 1757 and 1769, newly arrived Spanish missionaries, as well as Chinese priests, spent much time clandestinely interviewing witnesses (including jailors!), obtaining copies of confidential documents from the provincial imperial archives, and gathering all possible relics of the martyrs. Pablo Yan 嚴 “Go-kuang” (1729?–97), a native Dominican from Zhangzhou, was charged with traveling to Rome in 1765 to deliver all the documentation gathered on the Fujian martyrs. This was not only the first step in the process of canonization, begun in Rome and finally concluded on October 1, 2000, with the proclamation of the martyrs as saints, but also a step in mobilizing Fujianese Christians into building a cult of the martyrs and encouraging veneration for those local Christians who had suffered with them and were either dead or alive. Chinese-language manuscript reports detailing the events of 1746–48 circulated secretly among Christians well beyond Mindong. In 1747 Qianlong unsuccessfully ordered the destruction of the remains of Sanz’s body, fearing they could become, as they did, a rallying point for the construction of Christian memory in Fujian and abroad. The faithful partitioned the belongings of the deceased missionaries and used the relics to heal sick people. Following Chinese practice, the soil of the execution ground soaked with the blood of Vicar Apostolic Sanz was secretly collected by Christians and made into curative blood pills (*pastillas de sangre*). In a few cases, people had visions of the deceased priests.²⁹

28. Qing emperors were aware of the danger of martyr-creation, a topic explored in Menegon 1996. In 1727, Yongzheng, for example, avoided executing the Christian members of the Imperial Household precisely for this reason; see Fu 1966, 154–55. This confession (AMEP, vol. 436, ff. 141–40 [sic]; YQTW, doc. 34, 137) was probably “spiced up” by the inquisitor, who wished to incriminate the arrested with a clear statement of guilt. Still, the statement reflected Guo’s stance, as evinced from other documents (see GM, 1: 354; AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 769–72 [YQTW, doc. 29]; AMEP, vol. 435, ff. 1033–32 [YQTW, doc. 33]; AMEP, vol. 436, ff. 141–40 [YQTW, doc. 34]; and *Acta* 1877, 354). Guo Jinren died in penal exile in north-eastern China around 1751.

29. On the gathering of documents and relics, see GH, 2: 483; on Pablo Yan, see *ibid.*, 582–84. One of the Chinese reports circulated among Fujianese Christians,

The strongest reminders of the confrontation with imperial authorities were probably the Christians who, after suffering torture and imprisonment in Fuzhou, were sent back to Fuan. These living symbols of resistance included some *beatas*, and they continued to engage in religious activities and maintained the memory of the suppression. Such was the case of the Muyang native Ambrosio Guo Hui ren 郭惠人 (1707?–post-1777). For his major role as catechist, he was the only Chinese Christian condemned to death in 1747. However, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in the jail of Fuan, where he spent over 25 years until his demise in the late 1770s. Through a jail window, he took confession with Chinese priests and communicated with other Christians. Once a year he received visits from his relatives, including a *beata*, thus maintaining a vital contact with the community. Guo's aunt, a prioress of the Third Order, Teresa Guo Quanshi 郭全使 (ca. 1689–1772), who had been detained in Fuzhou and tortured, was released. She continued to be a living reminder of the days of persecution, and an example of tenacity for a whole generation of younger *beatas*. These “survivors” kept the remembrance of the past suppression alive in Mindong.³⁰

Local Priesthood

Unknown to authorities, another fruit of the Christian localization process was coming to maturity: local priests. The religious leadership of the community was no longer only in the hands of the foreign missionaries. The first Chinese Dominican to receive an education in Manila

probably authored by the Chinese priest from Xinghua Matias Fu, is today preserved in AMEP, vol. 434, f. 889 (YQTW, doc. 38, 148–49); a Spanish version can be found in GM, 1: 473–75; and GH, 2: 315–17. On the destruction of Sanz's body at Qianlong's orders, see GM, 1: 422–27. On miracles attributed to the martyrs and their relics, see GM, 1: 451–52, quoting letters by the Chinese Dominicans Juan Bautista Fung de Santa Maria (Feng Shiming) and Simón Luo del Rosario, dated 1753 and 1755. On the collection of Sanz's relics (blood pills, parts of the chains used in jail, a bloody shirt) and their distribution to the communities of Fujian, see contemporary letter of Matias Fu, quoted in Arias 1893, 761–62. The theme of the healing power of human blood in Chinese tradition is dramatically highlighted in Lu Xun's famous short story “Medicine.” The related tradition of *gegu* 割股 (slicing of one's body to nourish one's ill parents) practiced in Fujian by filial daughters and sons is another example of the strong belief in the curative power of human blood and flesh.

30. See GH, 2: 535–36; AMEP, vol. 436, f. 142 (YQTW, doc. 34, 139).

during the Yongzheng and early Qianlong period, Juan Bautista Fung de Santa Maria, i.e., Feng Shiming, returned to Fujian in 1747 to fill the vacuum left by the death of his Spanish brothers. Between 1747 and 1753, when he was arrested by authorities, Juan Feng Shiming was the only Dominican priest in Mindong. He spent most of those six years shuttling between Fuan, Fuzhou, and Zhangzhou, ministering to Christians in those locales. Although the Fuan county magistrate apparently became aware of his presence soon after his arrival in Mindong, Christians denied that he had returned from Manila and instead claimed that he was living in the Philippines engaging in commerce, not in religious activities. According to one contemporary missionary source, however, “The officers in the yamen and all the gentiles [knew] that [Juan Feng was] . . . studying in Manila in order to come back and help the Europeans.” In spite of this, when provincial authorities finally arrested Feng in 1754, locals did not tell functionaries what they knew. High officials and their subordinates accepted the version provided by Feng himself and the Christians arrested with him. At the time, according to government reports, Feng was preaching and expounding the “religious rules” (*jiaogui* 教規) that he had learned while “doing commerce” in Manila, to a number of men and women—all relatives—gathered in the houses of some commoners and of two lower-degree holders, the *jian-sheng* 監生 Guo Chengzuo 郭承佐 and the *shengyuan* Liu Wei 劉渭. Provincial and central authorities never discovered that Feng was a Dominican priest; they maintained that he was simply a commoner who had gone to Luzon for commerce, had come back to Fuan once his funds had run out, and who “had used this [preaching] opportunity to earn a living.”³¹

Governor-General of Zhejiang and Fujian Karjishan (Ka-er-ji-shan 喀爾吉善) responded with a rather lenient sentence: the culprits would be beaten or exposed in the cangue, and Feng would be sent back to Fuan, where he would be “put under the control of his lineage (*jiao qinzu shouguan* 交親族收管) and not allowed to go around explaining

31. On reactions in Fuan to Feng’s sojourn in Manila, see a letter of Juan Alcover to Juan Fung, November 27, 1747, in GM, 2: 502; and GH, 2: 451. On Feng’s arrest, see memorial by Fujian-Zhejiang Governor-General Karjishan, QL 19/7/23 (Sept. 9, 1754), in *Gongzhong dang Qianlong chao zouzhe* 1983, 9: 228–29. The covering of the truth was so effective that until recently no historian realized that Feng Wenzhi was in fact Juan Fung; cf. Fang Hao 1988, 3: 163–68.

those teachings, thus preventing further subversion.” After receiving this memorial, Qianlong jotted, in vermilion, on the governor-general’s recommendation: “How would this measure prevent [the arrested Christian Feng Shiming] from spreading [those teachings] again? (*ci an mian qi reng xing zhuanbo ye* 此安免其仍行傳播耶).” Because all the arrested were related, and since Christian activities had been continuing in Fuan since the time of his father Yongzheng, it was clear to Qianlong that lineages were an ineffective means of control. In a later court letter, the emperor and the Grand Council observed that in this case, employing lineages as a measure of control was “truly a formality without substance” (*you shu youming wushi* 尤屬有名無實). The letter also criticized Karjishan for limiting himself to the mere application of the code, when he should have sentenced the main culprit to the more appropriate penalty of banishment to a distant province. If the authorities had suspected he was a priest, he would probably have been sentenced to death; instead, following the imperial suggestion, he was banned to malaria-infested Guangxi, where he died in July 1755. Feng’s tragic end, however, did not deter others from following the same path. Between 1744 and 1838, another 23 men from Mindong and the region of Zhangzhou entered the Dominican order and returned to minister in their native Fujian. In the eyes of the state, lineages were completely inefficient in controlling conversion. In fact, unknown to officials, a number of local men even acquired the necessary status to become religious leaders of the community. In the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s, these Chinese priests were joined by Spanish friars, and together they kept the Mindong communities alive. In spite of recurrent investigations and occasional arrests, missionaries reported that Christians increased in numbers in these years from 8,000 to around 13,000 faithful in Mindong alone.³²

32. See the critical vermilion endorsement by Qianlong on the memorial by Governor-General Karjishan, QL 19/7/23 (Sept. 9, 1754), in *Gongzhong dang Qianlong chao zouzhe* 1983, 9: 229; and the Grand Council response in First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, Grand Council Archives, *Court Letters*, no. 1549–50, QL 19/8/27 (Oct. 13, 1754), also reproduced in *Gaozong shilu*, juan 471, sub QL 19/8/27; cf. Fang Hao 1988, 3: 168; cf. Zhang Ze 1992, 84–85. For missionary reports on Qianlong’s rescript, see GH, 2: 468n48. See the list of Chinese Dominicans in GH, 4: 448–49. This list does not include a few natives of Mindong and the Zhangzhou region, who were trained in Naples and who were not Dominicans. For statistics on the mission at this juncture, see GH, 2: 439.

From Central State Suppression to Local Extortion

Lineages, however, were not the only local institutions that “overlooked” Christian activities. Most local magistrates limited themselves to issuing prohibitions but then did not truly bother to enforce them. The young and very energetic prefect of Funing, Li Ba 李拔, felt compelled in 1759 to launch a new rectification campaign in Fuan because once again “local people, as soon as they hear [the Westerners’] crazy preaching, become misled in their right minds, as if they had drunk some drug, they cannot awake, as if some kind of [evil] art was employed to control them!” He tried to rally the local gentry to repair the crumbling Confucian school; his priorities underline the fact that in the aftermath of the 1746 campaign his predecessors’ efforts at rebuilding local schools and academies had been in vain. In fact, by 1769, when two Spanish missionaries were captured by chance in Fuan, the county magistrate had become so accustomed to their presence that he tried to have the case dismissed before it reached the provincial level, probably in order to avoid further trouble for himself. The magistrate allegedly attempted to convince the missionaries to change their deposition—they had readily identified themselves as European priests—telling them: “You are not Europeans, but merchants native to China. Otherwise how could you speak so perfectly the Fuan dialect?” The official finally abandoned his awkward effort to hush the matter and transferred them to the provincial authorities. But, in contrast to his predecessor in 1746, the governor merely expelled the two missionaries to Macau.³³

33. The quotation by Li Ba, prefect of Funing, comes from an “Inscription for the Fuan School,” in FAXZ, 134–35. Li Ba (1729–?), a native of Jianwei 健爲 in Sichuan, had obtained his *jinshi* in 1751 (QL 16). At the age of 31 *sui*, in 1759 (QL 24), he was promoted to the rank of prefect of Funing; see his biography in *Funing fuzhi*, modern preface. On the 1769 arrests, see GH, 2: 493–501; QTS, vol. 1, doc. 142, 291–93; and National Palace Museum, Taipei, Grand Council Archives, doc. 10891, both dated QL 34/9/24 (Oct. 23, 1769). José Muñoz described the 1769 arrest in the “Relación de la persecución levantada en este partido de la villa de Fogán por el mes de julio del presente año de 1769, contra nra. SSma. Religión Xptiana en este Imperio de China”; see GH, 2: 494n10. A contemporary letter by Francisco Pallás, dated August 17, 1764, in GH, 2: 493, confirms official indifference to Christian activities at the county level: “We are enjoying some peace . . . since the mandarin has been content with issuing edicts against our sacred religion and against the Europeans, . . . but neither he himself nor his runners have spent any effort [in pursuing us].”

In spite of continuous policing, a network of converts as well as of sympathetic “gentiles” (mostly relatives of the Christians) succeeded in hiding the missionaries for years, transferring them to safe locations, and paying bribes to the local bullies or local officials who occasionally tried to blackmail them. Those identified as leaders were beaten and tortured during the crackdown in 1769, but the majority were pardoned following the usual anti-heterodoxy policy of “separating the followers from the leaders.” That year 60 converts and some “gentiles” who had helped hide the missionaries were arrested in Fuan, only to be freed by order of the provincial surveillance commissioner of Fujian. According to a contemporary Spanish version of his original Chinese memorial, he allegedly acknowledged that “we do not ignore that in Fuan there are many simpletons, men and women, who are followers of these teachings. However, since these teachings are very different from those of most superstitious sects, we will pardon those who will confess their crime in front of the tribunal.” By these words, the commissioner implied that Christians were more manageable and less dangerous than other heterodox groups. The commissioner’s interpretation was dramatically different from that of Governor Zhou Xuejian in 1746, who deemed Christians much more pernicious than other religious groups. Moreover, the commissioner extended legal protection against runners, soldiers, or other bullies to those converts who agreed to abjure their faith: “If in the future some soldiers, runners, or any other people were to assault your houses, or in any way dared to molest you, you shall denounce them [to the authorities]. You should not suffer any damage by keeping in fearful silence.” The commissioner had probably heard complaints of extortion from the arrested converts, whom he considered just ignorant farmers, innocent of sedition.³⁴

This pattern of extortion, which had initiated the 1746 campaign, did not change in the following years. In 1771 another missionary, José Muñoz (1742–1808), was discovered and expelled to Macau, but the local magistrate’s attempt to coerce a number of *beatas* into marriage was averted with a bribe. In fact, in missionary account books, bribery became a normal expense item. Muñoz, for example, in his 1772 accounts,

34. See Spanish version of memorial by Yu Wenyi 余文義, provincial surveillance commissioner of Fujian (cf. *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 1980, 3: 2079), dated QL 34:7.4 (Aug. 5, 1769), quoted in GH, 2: 500–501, from José Muñoz, “Relación de la persecución.”

dutifully noted 321 pesos as “expense in the three tribunals of Fuan, Funing, and Fuzhou . . . spent when captured by the infidels . . . to avoid the spreading of the persecution and the arrest of other Fathers in Fuan.” In all the local crises that characterized the life of the community in this period, we see a mix of official negligence, blackmail attempts by local bullies, and occasional arrests. Even during the next large, empire-wide anti-Christian campaign, in 1784–85, Mindong remained relatively untouched. According to local Christians, the county magistrate of Fuan “admonished rather directly his head runners and soldiers to avoid attacking the Europeans, and to avoid summoning to the tribunal those Christians who seemed to firmly adhere to their religion.” Soldiers and runners once again warned the missionaries of the coming danger, and locals, including non-Christians, did their best to hide the foreigners. A missionary report written in 1786 observes that “the people [of Fuan], fearing that the officials could find any of us [missionaries] in their house searches, did all they could to prevent it.” As a result, Governor of Fujian Yade 雅德 reported to Beijing that “there really are no Catholics in Fujian”!³⁵

The 1784–85 campaign became an occasion for local officials and their retainers to extort large quantities of money from Christians, clearly without the slightest notion of finding any missionaries. As observed by the native priest Pablo Yan, military officials sent from Funning Garrison

did not proceed to capture any Christian ministers but contented themselves with issuing proclamations against the Christian religion. . . . They were sent not to arrest priests, but to frighten them and force them to leave their terri-

35. On bribes to avert remarriage, see GH, 2: 521. José Muñoz's 1772 accounts are in APSR, *China*, vol. 10, ff. 13r–v. For examples of blackmail in the 1770s, see GH, 2: 521–22. On the quoted advisory to Christians by the Fuan county magistrate in 1784, see Willeke 1948, 127n52; on Fuan residents helping hide the missionaries, see GH, 2: 570. On Governor Yade's statement, see Willeke 1948, 127: “In order to convince the central government that there were no foreign missionaries in the province, the Fukien officials collected in the form of signed bills of apostasy evidence to show that they had stamped out Christianity completely. When they found fervent Christians recusant, as, of course, they did, they called only upon the weak and lukewarm and compelled even non-Catholics to give their signatures. After Governor [Yade] had collected a sufficiently imposing number of these signatures, he felt safe in reporting to the emperor that ‘there are really no Catholics in Fukien’”; cf. QTS, vol. 2, doc. 323, 655, for the sentence in the original memorial: 實無崇奉天主教之人。

tory. . . . Christians' properties were plundered due to the insatiable greed of the officials and their runners. . . . This is a most unjust and tyrannical persecution, because they leave the priests alone, but they relentlessly try to ruin this Christian community by extorting money, trying to force people, one by one, to renounce the faith. We fear that this pattern of extortion will set the standard for future officials and runners, since they have no other income for supporting themselves and their families than these unjust extortions.³⁶

*Peace Until 1836: The Jiaqing and
Daoguang Reigns (1799–1840s)*

Indeed, the pattern of extortion mentioned by Fr. Pablo Yan would prove lasting. Until 1836, no major anti-Christian campaign was waged again in Mindong. A *status quo* was established, whereby bribery could always buy some peace from local headmen (“*cabecillas*”), soldiers, or runners. Missionaries were occasionally arrested or kidnapped but could always be freed, either through the payment of ransom or through the intervention of some Christians with clout. This period coincided with the reign of the Jiaqing emperor (1796–1820) and the first two decades of the Daoguang era (1821–50), and it saw a rise in the number of Christians and of Chinese and foreign clergy. This growth in Fujian occurred in spite of harsh anti-Christian campaigns in other parts of the country during the Jiaqing reign. Two major campaigns, in 1805 and 1811, might be seen as the outcome of the declining influence of the missionaries stationed at the court and of broader shifts in the international setting and in Chinese social life. By the late eighteenth century, very few priests engaged in technical and artistic work in Beijing (no longer Jesuits, since the order had been disbanded in 1773), and those who remained were isolated from the throne and in no position to act as intercessors for provincial missions. The British were becoming more menacing day by day, and the prolonged White Lotus rebellion (1796–1803) made the government suspicious of possible alliances between

36. Letter of Fr. Pablo Yan, September 10, 1786, quoted in GH, 2: 571n4. It is difficult to assess whether official corruption in the late Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns became more prevalent than it had been before. The profligate Heshen 和坤 administration as well as rising population and prices probably put an additional strain on the resources of yamen personnel, who did not receive any stipend but had to count on “customary fees.” On corruption in the Qing period, see Park 1997; and Thornton 2007, chaps. 2 and 3.

domestic and foreign enemies. Many of the elements found in previous anti-Christian campaigns were again at work in 1805 and 1811 (fear of heterodoxy and the establishment of an alternative hierarchy of power), and there was a particular concern for Catholic activities in the capital, where the personal safety of the emperor was threatened in 1813 during the Eight Trigrams uprising.³⁷

Faraway Fuan, however, seemed to escape the attention of the central government. The lesson learned by county magistrates, yamen employees, and local residents during the 1746 campaign and in later incidents was that the imperial wrath against Christians brought only trouble to officials and local powerbrokers alike. Better to keep quiet, to live and let live. The lull lasted over four decades, until 1836; it was so quiet that missionaries talked of a period of “peace.” Local officials were consciously ignoring orders from the central government, and no reports on the situation in Fujian ever reached the capital during the Jiaqing period. Throughout the large anti-Christian campaign in 1811, orders were sent to all provinces to suppress Christian activities, but in fact stringent measures were taken only in Beijing. The authorities in Beijing, for example, removed all imperial inscriptions issued by past emperors and displayed on churches in the capital to make it clear to Chinese subjects that Christianity was indeed illegal. In spite of this, when the officer of the coastal military post of Baishisi 白石司 in Fuan county asked the local magistrate what he should do in response to the new imperial proscriptions of 1811, the latter allegedly answered: “The imperial decree forbids the false sects of Europe. These evil sects do not exist in Fuan. If there are Christians here, they cannot be included among those [sects], for the simple reason that the imperial palace is full of them. Therefore follow [my lead] and act according to what I said.” Mindong officialdom was clearly interested in maintaining local peace through a policy of noninterference. In fact, when in 1814 a new magistrate tried to intimidate Christians into paying bribes and arrested some to obtain a ransom, he found resistance in his own yamen. One of his secretaries and a number of soldiers were Christians, and they threatened to leave their posts if their fellow Christians were further harassed.³⁸

37. On these campaigns, see Fang Hao 1974c and Beckmann 1946.

38. Among the 130 Jiaqing-period memorials on Christianity preserved in Beijing and Taipei that I perused, only one pertains to Catholic activities in

The neglect allowed for an increase in the number of clergy, due also to the formation *in loco* of native priests. In 1797, for the first time, two novices in their early twenties, who had been instructed in Latin by a Spanish missionary, entered the Dominican Order in Fuan itself, rather than travel to Manila or elsewhere. This step was later followed by the establishment of the “clandestine” Seminary of Santa Cruz in Qitian 溪墘 (Fuan county). After laborious negotiations with ecclesiastical authorities in Rome and Manila and adequate financial preparations, a building was erected in 1813, with five students enrolling for the priesthood. By 1834, the year of its closure, the seminary had produced seven secular priests with enough knowledge of Latin and moral casuistry to attend to their flocks in Fujian, as well as a number of well-trained catechists. Moreover, starting in the 1790s, the number of converts in Mindong increased. A 1795 statistical list reported that in the territory of Fuan alone there were 10,486 Christians. In a 1804 report, the number of Christians in all of Fujian was estimated at over 20,000, and in 1816, they apparently had doubled to around 40,000(!), with a marked increase in Mindong. Among them were around three hundred *beatas*.³⁹

Vicar Apostolic Roque Carpena (1760–1849) left this description of the peaceful and public Christian worship and activities in Mindong in the 1820s and early 1830s:

northwestern Fujian; cf. *QTS*, vol. 3, doc. 504, 1008–9. Anti-Christian campaigns in the Jiaqing reign focused mainly on Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Zhili. The first large campaign in 1805 interested mainly the capital, Zhili, and Shandong, and in 1811 Beijing was the main focus; on these two campaigns, see Laamann 2006, 68–76. On the attitude of Fuan’s county magistrate in 1811, see letter of Carpena to Propaganda Fide, July 13, 1812, quoted in Gentili 1887–88, 2: 365. On the 1814 case in Fuan, see GH, 3: 33. Memorials on Christianity kept in First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, are published in *QTS*; Taipei estimate is based on my own research.

39. On the erection of the Fuan seminary, see GH, 3: 45–53. The draining of financial endowments in Macau and the death of the founder and only professor led to the closing of the seminary in 1834 and the transfer of the seven remaining students to Manila. For statistics, see the list by Juan Garcés, in GH, 2: 588–91, including 1,514 Christians in Zhangzhou and 2,122 in Fuzhou, and a total for Fujian (excluding some locales such as Ningde, Luoyuan, or Funing) of over 14,000. Even allowing for imprecision and exaggerations, it appears from extant sources that the increase was indeed substantial (see GH, 3: 38–39; on number of *beatas*, GH, 2: 70). Nevertheless, this increase, although rather phenomenal given the conditions of prohibition of Christianity, was also a consequence of the almost tripling of the population of China between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; see Paul Cohen’s remarks in *CHOC*, 10.1: 546.

In spite of the severity of Chinese laws against Christianity, presently the church of Fujian suffers no harassment from the government and its officials. The seven chapels existing in the Vicariate now can be practically considered public. In one or two of them the Holy Eucharist is [permanently] kept with all possible decency [in the tabernacle]. In all of them we celebrate the divine sacrifice [of the mass] with the gates open, and even gentiles often come and attend the instruction and preaching of the missionary.⁴⁰

Another missionary added that “the most solemn acts of our religion [can] be exercised publicly, not only in isolated mountain locales or in the woods, but also in the plains and valleys, in the larger villages, and, as a matter of fact, even in the presence of mandarins.” Given the tolerant attitude of local officials, priests and Christians felt emboldened enough to openly resuscitate the communal activities of their Christian community.⁴¹

The Last Anti-Christian Campaign in Mindong (1836–39) Before the Opium Wars

A new and rather violent campaign in Fuan county ended these four decades of truce in 1836. This outburst was occasioned by the discovery of criminal activities allegedly connected to the region’s Catholicism, and these allegations turned into a ripe opportunity for county officials to engage in financial squeezing of the Christian communities. The 1830s were characterized by booming population and vagrancy, increasing systemic economic difficulties, a generalized deterioration in bureaucratic ethical standards, and a resurgence of “sectarian” activities empire-wide. Within this framework of social unrest, in October 1835 the Daoguang emperor issued an edict against heterodoxy, targeting the restless areas of the country beset by organized banditry and secret societies. The case that emerged in northern Fujian at this time and that implicated the Mindong Christians alarmed provincial officials exactly because of its violent, criminal nature, as well as its purported heterodox connections. A Fuan native known by his battle name of “San-bu-

40. Letter of Carpena to Propaganda Fide, October 19, 1832, in Gentili 1887–88, 2: 407.

41. GH, 3: 75, quoting letter of Calderón, November 4, 1837. In 1820, the Mindong communities held a large gathering and public festivities for the first episcopal ordination ever in Fuan county; see Gentili 1887–88, 2: 386.

pa” (三不怕, “Does Not Fear the Three [Things],” i.e., Heaven, Earth and officials), alias of Guo Ruowen 郭若汶, led a group of local criminals accused of extortion, robbery, illegal mining, and forging of weapons in the mountainous region between Fuan and Gutian counties. He was arrested and died in prison in Yanping prefecture, but one of his followers, Peng Tingxing 彭庭興, adopted the even scarier name Wu-bu-pa (五不怕, “Does Not Fear the Five [Things]”; what the extra two “things” were, we do not know) and continued to lead the gang. A rich commoner from Gutian, Lin Dechun 林德春, whose fields had been damaged by the gang’s illegal mining activities, traveled to Beijing and petitioned the central government directly for intervention. In his petition, Lin accused the two bandit leaders of “spreading the Western Teachings, gathering crowds, extorting money, and engaging in robberies,” and he told authorities that Fuan county was the hotbed of Catholic heterodoxy in the region. The central government ordered Fujian officials to investigate the case and also uncover clandestine Christian activities. Almost two years later, in early 1838, Governor-General of Zhejiang and Fujian Zhongxiang 鐘祥 summarized the case in a report for the emperor and clarified that the denunciation by Lin Dechun had been full of imprecise information. San-bu-pa was only allegedly a Christian, and Lin had gotten the idea of blaming the Christians because “he had seen that everywhere [authorities] often hung public proclamations forbidding the Western teachings, the Tiandi Society 添弟會 [sic], and so on.” It turned out that none of the sixty Christians arrested in the campaign had ever known San-bu-pa.⁴²

42. For an overview of the problems besetting the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, see CHOC, 10.1: 107–62. Lin Dechun was, according to missionary sources, an *abogadillo*, i.e., a petty lawyer, an indication that he might have had some training for the examinations and in legal matters, and that he belonged to the officially despised group of pettifoggers. The kind of direct petition through the Office of Transmission in Beijing that he presented was rare in the nineteenth century, but possible; see Bodde and Morris 1967, 464–65, citing an 1815 case. According to Gentili 1887–88, 2: 417, Lin was sent back to Fuzhou from Beijing to be interrogated by the governor, who was suspicious of his accusations, but died soon after his arrival from exhaustion. Guo Ruowen, alias San-bu-pa, was a native of the Christian village of Xiyin and possibly for that reason identified as a follower of the “Western Ocean Teachings”; see Gentili 1887–88, 2: 416, 418. For an account of the 1837–38 suppression based on missionary sources, see GH, 3: 76–94; and a memorial by Governor-General Zhongxiang summarizing the case in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Palace Memorials Archives (*Gongzhong dang* 宮中檔), no. 1163 (National Palace Museum Library,

Nevertheless, Lin's accusations had an effect: the Christian communities in the region of Fuan suffered a severe repression between June 1837 and 1839. Initially the acting county magistrate, Zhou Xiling 周錫齡, resisted attempts by provincial authorities to arrest local Christians, objecting that they were peaceful subjects and that arresting them would only upset local order. For his good offices, Zhou received a "reward" of 300 pesos (i.e., ca. 225 taels) from the Christians, but his biographical record in the Fuan local gazetteer seems to confirm that he was indeed a merciful and considerate official. However, his successor, Guang Lian 光謙, took a completely different course in June 1837 and engaged in a ferocious search for missionaries and Christian places of worship. Guang, according to Christian sources, sought public apostasies, especially from Christian literati, and resided for several days at a time in the major Christian strongholds to obtain the desired results and destroy places of worship. In the process he and his subordinates also extorted large quantities of money from local communities, amounting, according to an 1838 missionary report, to the remarkable sum of 18,000 pesos (around 13,500 taels).⁴³

However, in contrast to the past, certain communities successfully resisted official repression. For example, the pugnacious residents of the mostly Christian mountain village of Xiyin attacked the runners who

Gongzhong dang bound set, collection 3, part 1, 4: 420–26, dated DG 18/1/18 [Feb. 12, 1838]; I thank Grant Alger for pointing out this memorial to me). Quotations here are from memorial no. 1163, 423; an attachment to the same memorial, 426, specifies: "All the [Christian] criminals have informed us that they have never known Guo Ruowen [= San-bu-ba] and his associates denounced by Lin Dechun"; cf. a Spanish summary of this document in GH, 3: 90. See also earlier memorials on this case in QTS, vol. 3, docs. no. 578–82, 1214–18.

43. Zhou Xiling, a *jinshi* from Guiding 貴定 in Guizhou, was acting county magistrate of Fuan in 1836. Local people were so impressed with the good government and swift judicial procedures during his short tenure, that he is one out of only three Qing magistrates who received a biography in the "Famous Officials" chapter of the gazetteer. A note specifies that usually government permission was needed to include magistrates in that chapter (thus the low number of people included), but that such permission was not even sought in the case of Zhou: "Since his government had been so good, women and children in unison publicly petitioned for his inclusion in the biographies, and thus his biography was added after the gazetteer had already been completed"; see FAXZ, 266, 301–2. Guang Lian was a *ju ren* from Tongcheng 桐城, Anhui; see FAXZ, 266. Tongcheng was one of the strongholds of Confucian scholarship in the Qing period, and this may partly account for Guang's zeal in suppressing heterodoxy. On the sums extorted, see Badia 1838, f. 234r.

had reached their houses and then mortally wounded their commander. Even though five foreign missionaries were then hiding in the village, the county magistrate had to order a retreat, only arresting one local beggar as scapegoat. He obtained a bribe of 1,300 pesos (ca. 975 taels), and when later he ordered his runners to return to Xiyin and raze the local church, another bribe of ten pesos (ca. 7.5 taels) kept them away. In a village near Ningde, local people protected Vicar Carpena from his captors by beating them up and expelling them from the village. In response the local official led a detachment of 50 soldiers and 200 militia to the village again. The entire population scattered in the mountains and continued to hide the vicar in a cave. They waited out the troops, who left the devastated village empty-handed a week later. Other places, however, were not as successful in defending themselves. Churches were destroyed in Muyang, Dingtou, and Qitian, and rich local Christians paid heavy bribes to the county magistrate. The repression also touched the Christian community of Fuzhou, which had flourished in the first decades of the nineteenth century. However, in most other communities of Fujian, such as Luoyuan, Lianjiang 連江, Xinghua, Funing, and Zhangzhou, local magistrates did not disturb the Christians.⁴⁴

The 1837–38 anti-Christian campaign, in spite of its destructive effects in Mindong, ended up being a spotty attempt by provincial authorities to respond to central orders against banditry and imagined connections between Christianity and “secret societies.” It elicited a mixed reaction from county magistrates, who selectively implemented or deflected orders. The prospect of financial gain helped magistrates make decisions. At the time, a number of secret societies were indeed active in Fujian, and the northeastern mountainous areas of Mindong had been since the late Qianlong era the breeding ground for at least three branches of the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandi hui 天地會). The misleading denunciation that triggered the anti-Christian campaign in Fuan had been inspired, in the fantasy of Lin Dechun, by the language of public proclamations denouncing these secret societies and all other heterodox groups, including Christians. But the peaceful and largely tolerated activities of Fujianese Christians were, in the eyes of most officials, quite different from those of the secret societies and of bandit gangs, which were usually made up of vagrant men like San-bupa and his associates. Christians were mostly farmers and artisans who

44. For an account of these events, see GH, 3: 81–86. A list of destroyed churches is found in GH, 3: 96.

lived in integrated families among other villagers and conducted normal lives, as the attitude of Magistrate Zhou Xiling implied.

Magistrate Guang's use of brute force against the local Christian communities created an atmosphere ripe for intimidation and financial extortion, and his intrusion in local life demoralized many Christians, who did apostatize, as missionary sources lamented. But the effective protection granted by some communities for their foreign pastors also showed, for the first time, a potent level of resistance against government's efforts at disrupting Christian strongholds. Lars Laamann observes that the Daoguang reign was a time of "increased self-confidence for China's Christian communities," and the Mindong case confirms this perception and demonstrates that localization had been fortified during the four decades of toleration and semi-public activities of Christians. The quick recovery of the communities, from 1840 to 1845, testifies to their vitality. The situation of relative social harmony achieved before 1837 prevailed again, and, as a local missionary observed:

Christians live mixed with gentiles, not only in the same villages and streets, but even quite often in the same house, connected by the most intimate blood ties. Our churches are public, are known to the gentiles and even to the mandarins. The singing of Christians is a patent sign everywhere of our religion. And so far nobody has opposed or molested us. It seems that even the mandarin himself is happy to see us prosper.⁴⁵

But new international and domestic developments were about to alter dramatically and profoundly the kind of Chinese dominance that had characterized the history of Christianity in China up to the 1840s. Beginning with the Opium Wars, the old ways of the localized Catholic communities and more aggressive and "modern" modes of religious propagation within the new regime of international treaties blended together to produce an entirely new chapter in the history of Chinese-Western relations, and of Christianity in China. We will turn to those developments in the conclusion to this book.⁴⁶

45. Letter of Vicar Calderón, 1845, quoted in GH, 3: 117.

46. On secret societies in Fujian, see tables in Zhuang 1994, 97–99, 102–3. On the Tiandi Society in Fujian, found in Yanping and elsewhere, see Lian 1989, 198–200. On the demographics of banditry in southern China, made up of many single uprooted men, see Antony 1989; for a summary of scholarship on the complex interaction between secret societies and sectarian popular religion, see Ownby 2001. Quotation from Laamann 2006, 80; on the recovery in 1840–45, see GH, 3: 114–17.

FIVE

The Christians of Fuan

The previous chapters charted the history of Fuan Christians over a period of two centuries, paying particular attention to the relations between the Christian communities and Fuan's local society and the state and detailing the slow, sometimes serendipitous path of Christian localization within Mindong society. Some questions, however, remain unanswered. What physical and social conditions shaped the development of this localized Christianity in Fuan? Why did local society tolerate Christian activities? Why did lineages apparently abdicate their role of social control over their Christian members? And, most important, why did people convert, and how did Christians make their values and rituals acceptable to local communities? The answers to these questions, pursued in the remaining chapters of this book, help explain the transformation of a foreign, global religion into a local one. They also give us insights in the workings of "heterodox" religious communities in late imperial times and illuminate in unusual detail the way these communities developed within local spaces tolerant of their socio-religious "deviance."

The Physical and Human Landscapes in the Making of Christian Communities

As noted previously, Fuan county was relatively marginal in the administrative, economic, and cultural hierarchy of late imperial coastal Fujian, and this marginality helps explain why, by 1632, the Jesuits had

yet to travel to this corner of the province. Although Aleni had met the magistrate of Fuan, Wu Sanzhu, and probably discussed geography and astronomy with him and had baptized a small group of promising local students during the triennial examinations in Fuzhou, he and his Jesuit confreres were attracted to the populous and culturally advanced areas of the provincial capital and the coastal prefectures of Minnan. There, the Jesuits saw opportunity within sophisticated scholarly networks and a commercialized economy, more attractive than the agricultural backwater of Fuan. As we have seen in previous chapters, this Jesuit neglect was a decisive factor in the initial contact between Dominicans in search of a receptive area for evangelization and Fuan literati looking for priests, a rare commodity.

The landscape of Mindong conditioned human life there and, of course, the organization of the Christian communities. High mountain ranges on the western, northern, and southeastern sides effectively isolate the region from Zhejiang to the north and from the rest of Fujian on all other sides. Due to this physical isolation, mitigated only by sea access, an eighteenth-century prefect of Funing, Li Ba, described his jurisdiction as “a realm of waters, a mysterious and obscure region” (*zéguo aoqu* 澤國奧區). Li mentioned that the imperial highway crossing his native land of Sichuan was famous for winding through high mountains and almost touching the sky, but that Mindong’s mountains were even higher and steeper. The Dominican missionary Domingo Navarrete suggests the same remoteness in his description of a journey from Fuzhou to Fuan in late October 1659: “[From Fuzhou to Fuan] I travel’d five days . . . over hills and mountains that reach’d the clouds. . . . [On the last day, before reaching Fuan] I went up and down seven hellish mountains.” The road system used by Navarrete was very limited; during the Ming, the subprefecture of Funing was served only by one main government coastal road connecting Fuzhou to Wenzhou in southern Zhejiang, through Luoyuan, Ningde, Funing, and Fuding 福鼎 (the so-called Fu–Wen 福溫 Highway). A secondary road departed from the coastal highway and reached Fuan in the interior, then proceeded north and reconnected to the highway in Fuding. During the Qing, the major road connecting Fuzhou to southern Zhejiang shifted from the coastal route to a new route passing through Fuan, and this made Fuan the center of Mindong, although Funing remained the prefectural administrative seat. However, none of the five major postal routes of Fujian

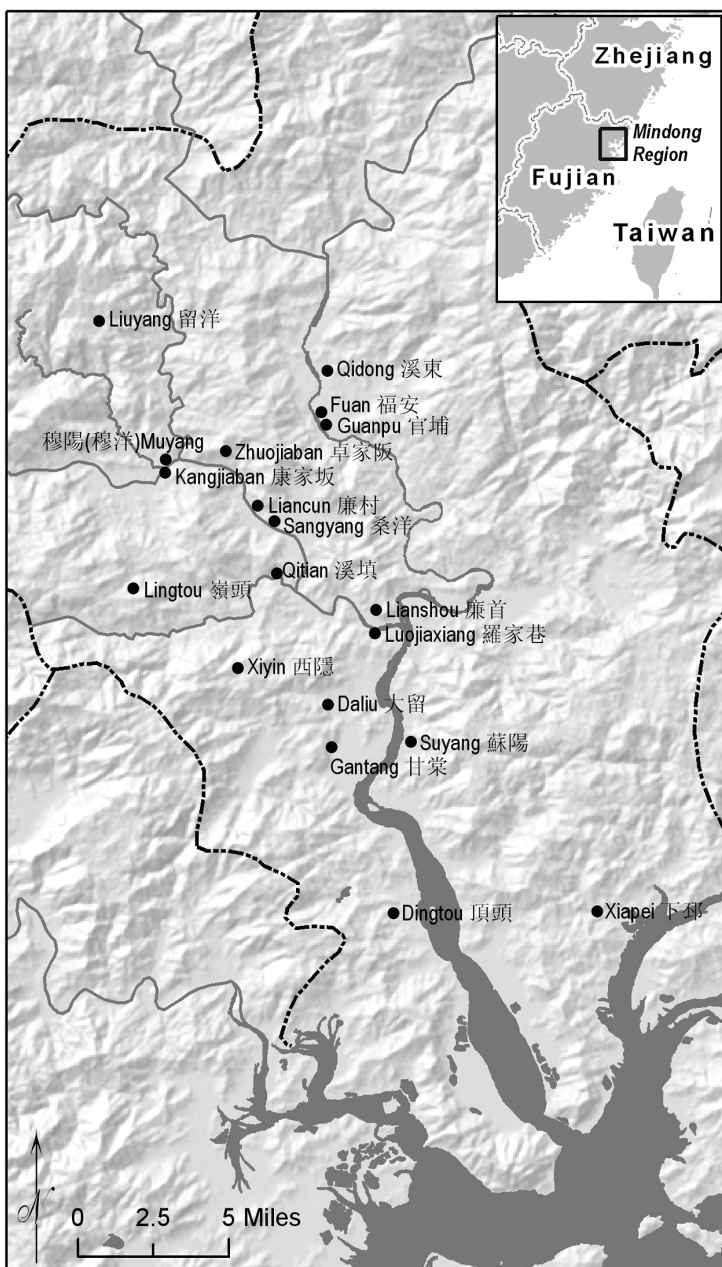
intersected Mindong, an indication of Mindong's marginality in the administrative hierarchy.¹

Yet, Fuan was not inaccessible. Mindong accounts for almost one third of the total coastline of Fujian. Several harbors run deep inland and facilitate communications between the open sea and towns in the interior, thus enabling easy travel to and within the region by water (see Map 5.1). During peaceful times in the seventeenth century, the sea was generally the safest way to reach Mindong, although the intermittent presence of pirates in the harbors did pose threats, as the Dominicans testified. From the 1630s until the Qing pacification, when the water route became usable again, missionaries were forced to sail to Minnan or Fuzhou and then to proceed by land to Fuan. Once in Mindong, Christians and priests alike used the relatively short, shallow, and turbulent local rivers for intraregional journeys.²

The rivers were critical for the missionaries' goals. Most of the larger Christian communities emerged in villages along the banks of these rivers, and priests and Christians traveled along established networks of land and water transportation to move about and forge communitarian connections. This transportation network had a long history: a local marketing system had emerged during the Southern Dynasties and Tang periods, when Han migrants reached Mindong, then a sparsely populated non-Han territory. The pace of Han settlement reached a peak during the Song period and continued into the Ming and Qing periods, when a minority ethnic group, the She 畬, settled the mountainous areas of Mindong. Eighteenth-century missionary sources, combining Chinese and Spanish administrative nomenclature, describe a hierarchy of locales where Christian communities were then found in Fujian. The

1. For Li Ba's comments on the isolation of Funing, see *Funing fuzhi* 1991, 1321; and Miao Pinmei 1999, 19. On Navarrete's journey to Fuan, see Cummins 1962, 147–48. On the conditions of roads in the Ming and Qing periods, see *Fujian gonglu shi* 1987, 25, 30; cf. also *Ningde diqu zhi* 1998, 503.

2. Three main rivers cross Mindong from north to south, but only the Changxi 長溪, the largest of them, flowing into the sea at Saijiang (賽江 or Saiqi 賽歧) in the harbor at Baima, had any importance as a major transportation venue. The Changxi has several small tributaries such as the Muyangxi 穆陽溪, also known as Mushui, that could be used to reach inland villages, including the important centers of Liancun and Muyang. On the hydrography of Mindong, see Liang Yizhang et al. 1992, 11; on types of boats used on Fujianese rivers in the Ming period, see Rawski 1972, 60.



Map 5.1 Map of the Fuan region, with main villages.

first tier was “cities” (*ciudades*), corresponding to important administrative centers such as the prefectures (*fu* 府) of Fuzhou and Funing. Then followed “towns” (*villas*), corresponding to the Chinese administrative unit of counties (*xian* 縣) such as Fuan and Ningde. Finally came more informal units, “villages” (*pueblos*, *cun* 村), “small villages” (*pueblecitos*), “neighborhoods” (*arrabales*), and “hamlets” (*aldeas*). The vast majority of Christian communities was found in larger “villages,” but several eighteenth-century missionary lists jointly yield a total of over a hundred small locales with some Christian inhabitants in Fuan county alone. Most of these locales were situated within a radius of 25 miles or 40 kilometers or less from the administrative seat of Fuan and could be reached within in a few hours or at most a day from central locations, as missionary sources record.³

The official administrative hierarchy, however, was relatively unimportant to the common people, except when dealing with lawsuits and taxation. For the literati, examination sessions took place at the county, prefectural, and provincial levels. Civil magistrates residing in county seats were overburdened by duties and often incapable of monitoring their jurisdictions with great efficiency. Officials were limited for the most part to the administration of justice and to tax extraction. Local order was mainly in the hands of the *baojia* units and of lineages. Since only a minimum number of military personnel were stationed in the counties, when exceptional events required a forceful hand, the provincial government engaged the army battalions stationed in the

3. On the early history of Fujian, see Clark 1990, 35–39. The She had only limited contacts with the inhabitants of the plains and the valley during markets, exchanging mountain products for commodities. They apparently did not attract the attention of Catholic missionaries and converted to Protestant Christianity in small numbers only in the twentieth century. In 1990, minority groups constituted 5.77 percent of Mindong’s population (164,977 people) and were almost all She (155,819). The She of Mindong accounted for 45 percent of all the She in Fujian, and over one third resided in the territory of Fuan township alone. Small Hui communities immigrated to Mindong at the beginning of the Ming dynasty from Quanzhou, and more than 8,000 Hui can be found today in the two counties of Fuding and Gutian and the township of Fuan; see *Ningde diqu zhi* 1998, 227–29. For missionary statistical data on local communities, see GH, 2: 256–57, 588; and GM, 2: 335–39, 363; cf. Menegon 2002, 214–15; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 118–27, and 2009, 202–12. Missionaries used the “Spanish league” (ca. 3 miles or 5 kilometers) to measure distances and reckoned that one day of travel in China corresponded to eight leagues, or ca. 25 miles or 40 kilometers; see Royo 1741a, 372.

garrison of Funing, as was the case during the anti-Christian campaign of 1746.⁴

In daily life, the network of markets played a significant role in stimulating exchanges of people, goods, and ideas. Until international commerce (especially of tea) flourished in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, directly connecting Mindong to Guangzhou and the global circuit, the commercial exchange of agricultural products happened in local markets and with neighboring Zhejiang. Due to geography, the border region of Fujian-Zhejiang where Mindong is located (*Min-Zhe bianjie* 閩浙邊界) shared cultural as well as economic ties. Places like Fuan had more connections with the Wenzhou region in southern Zhejiang than with the rest of Fujian, confirmation of the well-known fact that, in Fujian, intraprovincial communication was more difficult than interprovincial. Besides agricultural production, important economic activities in coastal Mindong were fishing and salt manufacture, activities also found along the southern Zhejiang coast. Fish and salt were sent to the interior markets of Fujian in exchange for mountain products (especially timber) and were important sources of livelihood for people along the coast. A clear sign of the socioeconomic connectedness of the Min-Zhe border region in traditional times was the frequent presence, in Fuan's local inns, of traveling peddlers from Pingyang 平陽 (southern Zhejiang) and porters from Zheyang and Shouning 壽寧 (Mindong counties on the border with Zhejiang), who acted as intermediaries with the region to the north. These trade connections would facilitate the extension of Christian networks in the late seventeenth century when the Dominicans, intent on Mindong, took over a missionary station from the Jesuits in Lanqi 蘭溪 in Jinhua prefecture in southern Zhejiang.⁵

The internal organization of the Dominicans and their evangelization style had to adapt to Mindong's physical constraints, marketing

4. On the duties of county magistrates, see, e.g., Ch'ü 1962. Although present since the Yuan dynasty, the garrison became an important element in the coastal defense of Fujian, as well as in the control of the interior in case of need, only in the Qing period; see *Ningde diqu zhi* 1998, 1166; *Fujian haifang shi* 1990, 171; and Miao Pinmei 1999, 105–7.

5. On marketing networks in Mindong and the Fujian-Zhejiang border region, see Lin Qixiong 1994; and *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 488. On the economy of coastal Mindong, see Zhu 1985–86, 455; Vermeer 1990, 8; *Ningde diqu zhi* 1998, 366; and Calanca 1999, pt. 1.1.

networks, and social structures. Members of the Province of the Holy Rosary were explicitly forbidden to use horses, and in their land travels they were ordered to go only on foot. The friars were thus limited to clusters of nearby villages, reachable by walking or by boat. In spite of these limitations, Dominican priests and local catechists were highly mobile and traveled to villages in their network frequently. The Jesuits, in contrast, had to cover large areas and only once a year or so left their main urban residences to visit rural “parishes.” Moreover, the Jesuits had strong personal connections with officials, who relocated from post to post, but the Dominicans, who did not cultivate such connections, strategically focused on strengthening their cluster of communities and branched out only when they had the personnel to do so. The manpower shortage was chronic. Thus, new Dominican missions to Zhejiang, Guangxi, and Guangdong were established only in the relatively stable Kangxi period and practically disappeared in the Yongzheng period. A lack of priests, a weak network of local Christians, and government pressure stopped expansion. In the core area of Fuan, however, even when Christian activities were driven underground, Christianity never faded. The number of personnel was paramount in determining the size of pastoral areas, or “missionary districts.” As observed by the missionary Joaquín Royo (1691–1748) in 1741, “the parts or districts under the care of each missionary are not fixed, but they are taken away or added to whatever district [some of us are caring for], according to the number of friars [we have].” The friars’ role as “traveling parish priests” informed the way pastoral care was organized. The main duty of Dominican priests toward the Fuan communities was the administration of sacraments, in particular baptism, confession, and extreme unction (the rituals of life and death). The fear of dying without the sacraments, and thus dying with a damned soul, was a major concern of both the Spanish friars and their flocks.⁶

6. On Dominican regulations for travel, see Aduarte 1962–63, 1: 95; cf. P. Fernández 1958, 44. On the Jesuit “parish system,” see HCC and Brockey 2007, *passim*. Quotation from Royo 1741a, 372. On the number of Dominicans in China in chronological perspective, see HCC, 307–8. On the pastoral of death in Europe, see Delumeau 1989; in the China mission, see Standaert 1994; and Menegon 2006a. For a discussion of the various perceptions of what constituted “community” (*jiao* 教, “teachings”; *christianitas* and *cristiandad*) by Chinese Christians and missionaries in late imperial times, see Xiaojuan Huang 2006, 11–19.

But administrative constraints internal to the Dominican Order and pastoral concerns were not as influential as the pre-existing structural factors of geographical terrain, transportation, location of settlements, and personal as well as kinship relationships. In setting the boundaries of pastoral districts, the missionaries pragmatically followed the natural, agricultural, and commercial boundaries of the villages that had sprung up over the centuries along the major waterways and the coast (see Map 5.1). In case of emergency, such settlements were more easily and safely reached or fled by boat, as a 1733 document confirms. In that year, Provincial Vicar Eusebio Oscot assigned the ministry of Dingtou, on Baima harbor at the mouth of the Changxi 長溪 River, to Blás de Sierra (1690s–1746), “because this place is aptly located to go by way of water [i.e., by sea] to the city of Funing and the counties of Ningde and Luoyuan,” also part of Sierra’s missionary territory.

Data on Fuan’s Christian population for the period 1632–1700 are fragmentary, but a reasonable estimate for 1700 is 4,000 to 5,000 Christians. In spite of governmental pressure, the number rose in the eighteenth century. The most complete statistics date to the Qianlong reign and show that, even during the period of Qing suppression, across over a hundred large and small locales with a Christian presence in Fuan county, at least two dozen had sizable numbers of parishioners. In 1741, for example, according to a list compiled by Joaquín Royo, the county seat of Fuan counted 1,126 Christians, and the villages of Muyang 1,858, Luojiaxiang 325, Qitian 296, Qidong 溪東 268, Sangyang 260, and Dingtou 260. During the course of the century, these numbers fluctuated, sometimes decreasing but sometimes dramatically increasing, as in the case of Dingtou, where in 1795 the number of Christians had more than doubled to a total of 575. In some places, the percentage of Christians within the general populace was relatively high. Muyang, for example, probably had around 5,000 inhabitants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; its 1,858 Christians in 1741 would thus represent around 36 percent of the village population. In the walled town of Fuan, the 1,126 Christians probably amounted to 10 percent of the local population. The 1741 list gives a total of 8,361 Christians for Mindong (including the areas of Ningde and Funing), of whom 7,537 were in the Fuan core area alone. This increase was likely due both to a century of evangelization work and to the general rise in population after the ravages of the Ming-Qing transition and the coastal evacuation of Fujian. In 1746, alarmed officials claimed, with some exaggeration, that

20 to 30 percent of the local population of Fuan actively practiced the Religion of the Lord of Heaven, and they identified over 3,000 households as Christian, a number that nears or exceeds the 7,500 individuals counted by Royo. The 1783 government census of Fuan county found 123,007 inhabitants; Christians thus formed roughly 6 percent of the county's population. They were concentrated in four main clusters of communities: the county seat of Fuan and nearby Qidong village; the walled village of Muyang; coastal Dingtou village; and the Muyangxi river valley, including the villages of Sangyang, Qitian, and Luojaxiang. By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the number of Christians reached the 10,000 mark, a quarter of all Fujianese Catholics at the time. Thus, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Christians grew into a sizable minority in certain areas of Fuan county and the larger territory of Mindong.⁷

Moreover, these Christians were a cross-section of society: men and women; old and young; members of large and small households; rich and poor; educated and illiterate. Rather than marginalized or ill-adjusted people, local Christians were integral parts of the normal fabric of society, as baptismal lists and a village census compiled by Blás de Sierra between 1719 and 1739 suggest. These sources afford us a glimpse into the gender, household structure, and age distribution of Christians in a few villages of Fuan county in the early eighteenth century. In the baptismal lists, I have selected for analysis a peaceful period during the late Kangxi period, May 1719–April 1721, preceding the government crackdown that followed Yongzheng's accession in 1723. In those two years, Sierra personally baptized 256 persons in Fuan county in the villages of Muyang, Sangyang, Liuyang 留洋, Luojaxiang, Qidong, Xiyin, and Gantang. Of them, 51.2 percent were females (131 individuals),

7. On assignment by Oscot to Sierra, see Royo 1733, 332. GH, 1: 82, estimates Muyang's population in the seventeenth century at 5,000 people; also cf. Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 493; and *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 119. For the number of Christians in Fuan in the mid-Qing, see Royo 1741b, 284. The county seat itself had probably between 10,000 and 11,000 inhabitants in the second half of the eighteenth century; see *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 118–19. On the official assessment of the Christian population in Fuan, see FAXZ, 153–55, text of the “Inscription for the Reconstruction of the Ziyang Academy” by County Magistrate Du Zhong. A memorial by Fujian Provincial Surveillance Commissioner Gioro Yarhašan (QTS, vol. 1, doc. 68) cites 3,000 Christian households in Fuan county. Missionary sources (e.g., Royo 1733, in GM, 2: 332–39; and Royo 1741b) give a number between 7,000 and 8,000 individuals. For historical statistics on Fuan, see Chen Jingsheng 1991, 195.

45.3 percent were males (116 individuals); in 9 cases (3.5 percent), the individual's sex went unrecorded. Only 45 of the 256 were adult baptisms (17.6 percent), that is, baptisms of individuals over sixteen, the legal age for becoming a taxpayer and the median age of marriage for women. This number of adult baptisms is to be expected in a well-established community, where most of the newly baptized were children of old Christian families, going back several generations. All children recorded were in good health, baptized when already two or three years old. Only rarely did Sierra note that the child was *in periculo mortis* (in danger of death). While the sex of 12 percent of these children was not recorded, males (40 percent) only slightly outnumbered females (38 percent). Among the adult baptisms, 32 were women (71.1 percent), and 12 were men (26.7 percent) (in one case, the sex was not recorded), a striking breakdown that shows the overwhelming rate of conversion of local adult women. Numerous anecdotal materials confirm that most converts were indeed women. The missionaries often complained about men's colder reception of their religion and praised both women's interest in Christianity and their piety. Once a family converted, all children, regardless of sex, were baptized, but women continued to constitute the majority of adult Christians and the most devout sector of the community.⁸

At the order of his superiors, in 1733 Sierra also compiled a complete census of Christians in the village of Dingtou, a document that offers us a finer understanding of age distribution, household structure, and gender balance in the early eighteenth century. Since similar censuses were destroyed by missionaries and Christians during the period of

8. My findings on the social composition of Fuan Christians are in line with recent research on the nineteenth-century Catholic communities of China, which shows that those communities were far from being formed by "rice Christians"; see Sweeten 1996, 28–29, 39, and 2001, *passim*. This research challenges Paul Cohen's characterization of Catholics in the nineteenth century as a community "apart, isolated, and often estranged from their fellow Chinese" and made up only of the most disadvantaged classes—poor peasants, shopkeepers, merchants, and vagabonds; see CHOC, 10.1: 557. On legal adult age, see Liang Fangzhong 1980, 469. Data from the 1937 Fuan census (Miao Pinmei, ed., 1998, 22) confirm that most women there got married between the ages of 16 and 20, men between the ages of 18 and 26. Sierra (1719–38) in his list calls people over 16 *adultos*. On the generational transmission of Christianity, see, e.g., the statements of Chen Shanglin 陳上琳 and of the *wusheng* Chen Kuai 陳楷, both arrested in 1746, who told the authorities during their interrogations that their families had been Christian for "three or four generations"; AMEP, vol. 434, f. 769v (YQTW, doc. 29, 66–67).

suppression, this snapshot of an entire Christian community is truly exceptional. Sierra's census was compiled using romanized Chinese names for internal purposes of ministry accountability and can be matched to genealogical records. According to the census, 46 Christian households, 29 of which belonged to branches of the local Huang lineage, resided in the village in 1733, for a total of 286 people, of whom 278 were Christians. A handful of non-Christian, cohabiting relatives was omitted from the count. We have no occupational details on these people, but it is likely that most were farmers, with the probable sprinkling of richer landowners. Nor can we determine with great precision the percentage of Christians in the entire village. According to Riccio, however, most of the village residents had converted in the 1640s. This early strong Christian presence is confirmed by the facts that, during the anti-Qing resistance, Dingtou became the seat of a Ming Christian militia, and that in 1651 the friars built their first large stone church and residence in this village. Tabulations based on genealogical and missionary records reveal that around 44 percent of the male members of the local Huang lineage were Christians by the 1730s. By 1837, after over a century of official prohibition, missionary sources report that two-thirds of the villagers were Catholics.⁹

For most of the younger Christians, the Dingtou census provides a precise age: 27.7 percent (77) were children under 15; 11.5 percent (32) were between 16 and 20; 6.8 percent (19) between 21 and 29; 1.1 percent (3) between 30–36. No ages were specified for the remaining 52.9

9. Dingtou (also written Tengtou 藤頭) is located along the coastline of Baima harbor, around 15 miles or 25 kilometers south of Fuan. The village name was variously spelled by missionaries as Tingtao, Tingteo, Tongtou, and Tiangteu; see Dehergne 1957, 34–36. Research on the missionary census of Dingtou is a collaborative work between Professor Zhang Xianqing (Xiamen University) and me. I found the Spanish archival document (Sierra 1719–39, ff. 45r–46v), transcribed it, and ordered it, offering a first analysis in Menegon 2002, 234–37. Professor Zhang later matched the romanized names of my transcript with the records in the Huang genealogy and made comparisons with the entire Huang lineage record; cf. Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 144–51, and 2009, 204–11. His estimates are based on tabulations of the cohort of men likely alive in 1733, including those born between the Kangxi period (1662) and the year preceding the census, 1732. Comments of missionaries in a number of their letters, quoted in GH, 1 and 2, and GM, 2, refer to a variety of occupations among Christians. The only notation on “occupation” in the Dingtou census is a derogatory mention of two *jugadores* (gamblers). On the Christians of Dingtou, see GH, 1: 83n3, quoting RH; GH, 3: 81; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 154, and 2009, 214.

percent (147), although from their marital status (married or widowed) we can infer that they were mature adults. The significant divide into adulthood is again age sixteen. General data on age composition in late imperial China are fragmentary, but sources for most Fujian localities in the early nineteenth century, including Fuan, report that around 40 percent of the population was under the age of sixteen, corresponding to the category of “male and female children” (*youding nannü* 幼丁男女). The Dingtou Christian community’s division into around one-third children and two-thirds young and mature adults roughly mirrors prevailing trends.¹⁰

An analysis of the Dingtou census of 1733 shows that Christian families were also average in terms of size. In early Ming Fujian, family structure was simple, and even fathers and sons registered as separate households and owned property separately. This structure was due both to the unstable political conditions of the time and to the early Ming’s heavyhanded taxation and corvée policies, which encouraged people to establish separate household registrations. By the mid-Ming, tax and service levy obligations were no longer linked to household size, and this favored the development of larger households. Two, or sometimes three generations, could live together under one roof. The late Ming practice of adoption of sons, who would travel abroad to work for their adoptive family, also contributed to an increase in family size. Although in the Qing adoption was heavily curtailed out of concern for lineage “purity,” relatively large “multiple households” remained common in Fujian. Such large households could be constituted by “stem families” (a married couple and a married son, with his family) or “grand families” (when more than one son married and lived at home).¹¹

Although the average size of the Dingtou Christian households was 5.5 members per household—corresponding to the statistical average in the general population from contemporary gazetteers—almost 60 percent of the households had between six and twelve members. This indicates a prevailing “adequate” standard of living, capable of sustaining larger families, as Arthur Wolf puts it. Among the more numerous households, we find both grand and stem families. An example of a

10. On the age ratios in the Fujianese population, see Ho 1959, 59; for Fuan, see Chen Jingsheng 1991, 195, referring to data from the Daoguang and Xuantong reigns.

11. Zheng 2001, 32–33, 36; Wolf 1985, 34.

grand family is no. 22 in Sierra's list. Here we have an uxorilocal marriage, with an outsider, Nicolao Guo, marrying a woman named Luisa from the local Huang lineage. The couple had four sons (Jacobe, Benito, Pedro [25 years old], unknown [12 years old]) and one daughter (Ines, 22 years old). Jacobe married Dorotea Luo, and Benito wed Ana Zhang. Jacobe had a son with Dorotea, named Pio (2 years old). All ten of these people, from three successive generations, lived under one roof. Given the age of their sons at the time of the census, Nicolao and Luisa probably were in their late 40s or early 50s, and Jacobe and Benito, likely the older sons, might have been in their late 20s or early 30s.¹²

Family no. 3 offers an example of a stem family belonging to the local powerful Huang lineage. Vicente Huang Jian 黄健 (zi Shigan 士乾, romanized as Çu-kun) and Rosa Hoa (surnamed Zhang [?]) in the genealogical record) had three daughters (Catalina, 24; Ines, 16; Lucia, 10) and four sons (Francisco Huang Wanjin 黄萬錦 [zi Wenxiu/Vuen-sieu 文繡], 20; Pedro Huang Wanzhao 黄萬釗, 18; Jorge, 7 [?]; Thomas Huang Wanjun 黄萬鈞, 3). Francisco was married to Polonia Liu 劉 from nearby Zhangbanyang 樟坂洋 village, and had a daughter with her, named Rosa. A sister of Vicente, either unmarried or widowed, Ana Huang, also lived in the household.¹³

Most of the Christian families were simple households, but some that boasted a rather high number of sons and daughters in their teens and twenties would in all likelihood become stem or grand families in the near future. For example, another Huang household, no. 24, had eleven members: Pedro Huang Dalü 黄大呂 (zi Kongyang/Kung-yang 孔陽, 1674–1756), a member of the Zhong 仲 sub-branch of the Shu 書 branch in the Huang lineage, was married to Rosa Zheng 鄭 (1681–1743, a native of Gantang village). The couple had seven male sons, most of them in their twenties and all recorded in the Huang genealogy, and two teenage daughters, Petronilla and Ursula. Dalü's brother's household, no. 36, had also eleven members, but here most of the offspring were daughters: Pedro Huang Dajin 黄大縉, zi Kongshen/Kung-xin 孔紳 (member of the Shu branch) and his wife, Juana Miao, had

12. On late imperial standards of living, see Wolf 1985, 49; on decreasing standards in the Republican period, see *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 116. In my first example from the Dingtong census, I use only the romanized Chinese name of the converts, since this family was not recorded in the Huang genealogy checked by Zhang Xianqing.

13. See Sierra 1719–38; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 145, and 2009, 204.

three sons in their teens and six daughters aged between 2 and 20 years (Isabel, Josepha, Jacinta, Rosa, Magdalena, and Maria). The ratio of daughters in this and other households was surprisingly high.¹⁴

Among the 278 Dingtou Christians, 145 were women (52.2 percent), and 133 men (47.8 percent). The ratio of adult men to women in the late imperial period cannot be established with precision, but studies of specific populations have shown a gender imbalance in infant mortality and, consequently, in the marriage market, due to the preference for male offspring. In general, males in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century China outnumbered females by 20 percent to 40 percent. In the Southeast as many as half the newborns—mainly baby girls—were killed within days of their birth, and sources specify that in Fujian people did so partly for fear of having to provide hefty dowries at the time of marriage. Female infanticide occurred more often in high-status families, however; daughters in low-status households usually could earn a bride price from relatively undesirable grooms unable to marry and were thus spared in higher proportions.¹⁵

Fuan followed the trend, and the local gazetteer reported that “it [was] a local custom to avoid raising female babies” and recounted the exemplary story of a local woman who drowned six of her baby girls in a bucket, only to be killed by a giant snake as heavenly retribution for her cruelty as she was about to drown the seventh. Officials tried to curb the phenomenon through proclamations, like that issued by Fuan County Magistrate Mao Wanhui during his tenure in 1610–15. Mao noted the importance of women in sustaining the marriage market and asked *baojia* leaders to denounce cases of female infanticide. In spite of the horror shown in local lore for the excessive carnage described in the gazetteer’s vignette and of official bans by well-meaning magistrates, people accepted and practiced female infanticide as part of life, and its illegality did not mean that it was perceived as immoral. The founding of orphanages by authorities and official prohibitions had no real impact on the custom. Missionaries also observed the widespread phenomenon. Some Dominicans in Fujian in the seventeenth century and

14. For a study of multiple-generation households that attempts to computer-simulate household development over an individual lifetime in historical China, and that argues that multiple-generation households were not as uncommon as previously thought, see Zhongwei Zhao 2000.

15. On male-to-female birth ratio, see Ho 1959, 60; and James Lee and Feng Wang 1999, 53, 60, 64–65.

in the late eighteenth century tried, with little success, to organize foundling homes and even commissioned catechists to baptize dying babies abandoned on the streets, girls being especially numerous. As a consequence of these demographic tendencies, the percentage of women in Mindong in late imperial times was lower than that of males and averaged about 42 percent in Fuan during the Ming period. We lack data for the Qing, but Republican period data for 1937–39 confirm this trend in Fuan county (59 percent males vs. 41 percent females). The gender imbalance in favor of men was, overall, consistent from the Ming to the Republican period, with around 45 percent more males than females in Fuan.¹⁶

Demographers have recognized that in periods of economic prosperity such as the High Qing, female mortality decreased, and that families, being more affluent, were able to afford the luxury of daughters. The Dingtou Christian community, however, seems to have a truly disproportionate number of women, a phenomenon for which there could be several possible explanations. Relative prosperity allowed families to feed more mouths. Another incentive to raise daughters could have been the possibility of fetching good bride prices from nearby families. It is also likely that religious factors contributed to this trend: Christianity's strict prohibition against infanticide, and the Christian custom of reserving resources to provide for Christian virgins greatly increased chances of survival for girls.¹⁷

16. On the story of divine punishment by the giant snake, see FAXZ, 735; for similar stories of karmic retribution for infanticide, see Mungello 2008, 14–44. On infanticide trends in southern China, see James Lee and Feng Wang 1999, 47–57, 61; in Fujian, see T'ien 1988, 30–31; in Fuan, see *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 117. On ineffective government policies to curb infanticide in general, see Ho 1959, 60; on Mao Wanhui's measures to prevent female infanticide (*jin yan nü* 禁淹女) in Fuan, see Mao post-1615, 4.5a. On female infanticide and Christian missions in general, see Mungello 2008; on Dominican attempts to salvage infants, see GH, 1: 85 and 304–6, referring to RH; and “Lista de las niñas redimidas,” post-1778?

17. On female mortality, see James Lee et al. 1992, as summarized in Mann 1997, 239. Varo's catechism, *Clear Proofs of the Holy Teachings* (*Shengjiao mingzheng* 聖教明證, preface 1677), strongly condemned “the disorder of girl drowning in China” (*Zhongguo yan nü zhi luan* 中國淹女之亂) and labeled it a “mortal sin,” a behavior unheard of even in barbarian places (*manfang* 蠻方) outside China: “Both sons and daughters are one's children. Isn't a daughter also flesh and bones of her parents?! . . . She is as much worthy of love as a son” (男與女, 均子也。女兒寧非親骨肉哉! . . . 可愛又無異於男子也); Varo 1903, 6.33–34 (modern pagination).

Sierra's baptismal lists and the Dingtou census offer an excellent demographic sample of "average Christians" in Fuan county. Relatively prosperous, these families were divided among simple, stem, and grand households, and larger households prevailed. These sources, however, leave important questions unanswered: What was the *social* composition of the community, and how did this affect the relationship of Christianity to local society? If Christian households were indeed "average" and part of existing family networks, how could they negotiate their departures from ritual and social conformity with the prevailing social institution at the local level, the lineage? The demographic information needs to be historically contextualized.

"Influential as Hundreds of Common People":

Christian Literati in Fuan

In the wake of the 1746 anti-Christian campaign in Mindong, the authorities found lists of "rebels" in foreign script, that is, the romanized baptismal lists compiled by itinerant missionaries. When the governor of Fujian, Zhou Xuejian, read a translated version of those confiscated lists, one missionary observed that "the poor guy was disappointed, since the majority of the [people] contained in the book were children, women, elderly, lepers, and many people who were already dead." In spite of this statement, however, we know that starting in the 1630s, and well into the eighteenth century, men were an integral part of the Christian community, and that some, especially the holders of lower degrees, occupied positions of leadership. As noted above, Christian literati represented the most influential status group among Fuan converts. Local students' and degree-holders' membership in the Christian community lent social prestige and support to Christian activities, provided protection for missionaries in moments of trouble, and facilitated negotiation with the existing local power structures, especially lineages.¹⁸

The appeal of Christianity among local literati is confirmed by government records and missionary sources alike. From the late Ming to the Kangxi period, several Fuan degree-holders, including a *juren*, some

18. Quotation from GM, 1: 348; the Spanish expression *pobre burlado* used here literally means "mocked poor guy." For detailed lists of Fuan Christian literati and degree-holders, see Menegon 2002, 246–47; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 108–9, and 2009, 162–63.

tribute students (*gongsheng*), many licentiates (*shengyuan*), students by purchase (*jiansheng*), and military students (*wusheng* 武生) converted. The missionary Francisco Varo proudly enumerated the Fuan literati baptized between 1632 and 1671 and summarized the situation of the late Ming and early Qing periods:

In the territory of Fuan alone, we Dominicans have had up to now, to my knowledge, seventy Christian licentiates (those that the Jesuits call *bacalaurei literati* [i.e., *shengyuan*]). I have personally known sixty of them, while ten died before I arrived in 1649, as I heard from Fr. García. Today, thirty-three among those I know are still alive, and twenty-nine died with the comfort of the sacraments and signs of being saved. Among the living ones, only three or four do not comply with the Christian obligations, and all the others confess every year and receive communion on the main feasts, and most are very devout. On top of these, I have known in that town [Fuan] five Christian *gongsheng*. They are like teachers, and the educational officials (*xueguan*) are chosen from among their number. Three are still alive, and one has been chosen as assistant magistrate of a city, but he has not gone there, to avoid damnation [for worshipping Confucius and the city god]. But he goes around the town as an important mandarin. We also had a good *juren*, a degree higher than *gongsheng*. . . . Also, there were some military mandarins during the Tartar war, but they did not last long in their charges due to the short time of that revolution.¹⁹

Other sources support and complement Varo's accounting of degree-holders. The materials on the anti-Christian campaign of 1637–38, for example, mention sixteen Christian *shengyuan* who were implicated and arrested, and Varo probably included them in his count. Some of them, moreover, including the *gongsheng* Guo Bangyong and the *juren* Miao Shixiang, had a prominent role during the anti-Qing resistance in the 1640s, as mentioned by Varo, Riccio, and local gazetteers. After the Qing conquest, the brothers Wang Daoxing 王道性 and Wang Daosheng 王道銓 in Muyang and Chen Wanzhong in Fuan (all Kangxi-period “tribute students by imperial grace,” *en-gongsheng* 恩貢生) supported the mission both financially and socially. Chen built a chapel near his house, and Wang Daoxing in 1706 wrote prefaces to two religious works by the Dominican González de San Pedro. Among the most accomplished Christians of the Kangxi period was a first cousin of the

19. Passage in Arias 1893, 172, quoting Varo's “Manifiesto y declaración” (1671). Varo here is rebuffing the accusations leveled by Jesuits that the Christians in Dominican communities could not earn degrees due to the prohibitions on the Chinese rites.

Wang brothers, Joseph Wang Daoya 王道雅 (1648–1723), who was selected in 1672 as a graduate for pre-eminence (*ba-gongsheng* 拔貢生) from Fuan's Confucian School to study in Beijing. There he was baptized by the Jesuit Ludovico Buglio (1606–82). After returning to Fujian around 1703, he occupied educational positions as county instructor of the Confucian school (*jiaoyu* 教諭) in Zhenghe county (Jianning prefecture, Fujian), and later as prefectural instructor of the Confucian schools (*jiaoshou* 教授) in Fuzhou prefecture, where he died in office. In Fuzhou, he became part of the educational and cultural network of the provincial capital and earned the esteem of Fuzhou Prefect Yang Yan 楊宴 (in office 1721–27). Around 1700 Wang Daoya grew critical of the Dominican positions on rituals, but his success as a government student and then as an educational official must have been for many years during the first half of the Kangxi reign a badge of honor that reflected positively on the Christians of Muyang. At this juncture, different sub-branches of the Wang lineage felt encouraged in embracing Christianity, which is still today the religion of most members of the lineage.²⁰

If contextualized within the statistics on higher education in Fujian at the time, the numbers offered by Varo tell a success story for Christianity among the literati of Fuan county. From the Wanli to the Chongzhen reigns (1573–1644), only five *jinshi* and seventeen *juren* came from the entire subprefecture of Funing, the lowest rate of success in Fujian. This trend worsened slightly during the Qing. By 1671, when Varo was writing, out of the 65 *gongsheng* degrees awarded in Funing since 1628, five had converted to Christianity (7.6 percent of the total). Among Christian degree-holders, however, most were simple county students (*shengyuan*), of whom, at any given time, there could have been between 200 and 400 in a locale like Fuan. The fact that the Dominicans were able to attract 70 *shengyuan*, five *gongsheng*, and a *juren*

20. On Chen Wanzhong, see Menegon 2003, 344–45. Information on Wang Daoya can be found in a testimony he wrote in Chinese at the urging of his Jesuit mentors on the religious strife over the Chinese rites in Fuan in 1702, preserved in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 168, ff. 5v–6r, where he writes at f. 5v: “I, Joseph, originally received baptism in Beijing at the hands of Father Li [Leisi]” i.e., Buglio; 若瑟原在北京耶穌會利[類思]先生受洗; and in the recently re-edited (2000) Wang lineage genealogy, “Lufeng wang shi zupu” 蘆峰王氏族譜, 19, as quoted in Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 111, and 2009, 164; cf. FAXZ, 343. According to Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 178, and 2009, 242, today the four sub-branches of the Wang lineage count at least 1,000 members, and around 600, concentrated in the two branches of Wang Daoya and his cousins, are Catholic.

in the late Ming and early Qing remains remarkable. Part of their success was due to the preliminary work of the Jesuits in Fuzhou in the 1620s and 1630s, but in spite of their hard stance on ancestral rituals and on the rites to Confucius and the city god, the Dominicans were able to continue drawing literati.²¹ Although literati and degree-holders were often the main anti-Christian foes, a good number converted. The Dominicans valued them for the influence that they could exert. In the 1630s, the Franciscan Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero observed about the first group of Christian literati he met in Fuan that each of them “was as influential as hundreds of [common] people.” One of the few notations in Sierra’s 1733 lists is, for example, *literato*, proof of the importance missionaries attached to such adult conversions.

21. In the late Ming, Funing accounted for only 0.6 percent of the *juren* degrees and 0.7 percent of the *jinshi* degree of Fujian province; these numbers decreased to 0.5 percent for *juren* and 0.6 percent for *jinshi* in the Qing; see Liu Haifeng and Zhuang Mingshui 1996, 152, 160, 212, 220. Scholars have noted that lower-degree holders were the preferred public of the Jesuit Aleni and his companions in Fujian; see HCC, 387–90. In the case of Fuan, the county gazetteer records that during the Chongzhen period (1628–44), when the Dominicans arrived in Fujian, a total of eighteen local literati earned the *gongsheng* (tribute student) degree. In the Qing period (Shunzhi through Qianlong), all categories of tribute students add up to over a hundred people in Fuan. The aggregate number of these higher-class *gongsheng* degree-holders (i.e., titles that could not be purchased) is divided as follows: Shunzhi 11; Kangxi 36; Yongzheng 10; Qianlong 51. The average is less than one higher-class *gongsheng* degree per year in the Qing; see FAXZ, 334–35 (Chongzhen reign); *ibid.*, 342–59 (Shunzhi to Qianlong reigns). On the other hand, it is practically impossible to calculate the full number of *shengyuan* in a given locale in the late Ming and Qing periods since local gazetteers are almost completely silent on this group. An inscription from Fuan dating to the Jiajing period (1522–67), however, refers to a total number of two hundred county students in the local Confucian school preparing for the prefectural exams (*diziyuan* 弟子員). Usually, students of a Confucian school were at least *shengyuan*; see FAXZ, 126, “Inscription for the Repairs of the Confucian School.” If we accept the number of one *shengyuan* for each 300 persons empire-wide in 1700 as extrapolated by scholars, then Fuan county should have had around 400 *shengyuan* at any given time in the eighteenth century, possibly less, since such a peripheral county had a smaller quota of admittance to the examination system than core regions of the empire. My calculation of local *shengyuan* is based on Fuan population statistics, cf. Chen Jingsheng 1991, 195; *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 117; and *Funing fuzhi* 1991, 329. Calculations for the late Ming and early Qing are more problematic, since the number of *shengyuan* degrees sold for revenue in the turbulent final years of the Ming and during the consolidation of Qing power until 1683 swelled enormously (Elman 2000, 140, based on earlier studies; Ho 1962, 179); on the *shengyuan/jiansheng* stratum in the Qing, see Min 1989.

The late Ming and early Qing, however, differed from the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods. Beginning in the 1630s, higher-degree holders all over the empire showed a general cooling toward the “Western Teachings.” Whereas in the earlier phase of relative religious freedom in Fuan we see among the converts a *juren*, some *gongsheng*, and a large number of *shengyuan*, in the era of suppression of Christianity we only find *shengyuan*, *wusheng*, and several *jiansheng*. In a place like Fuan, these Christian men enjoyed the respect of local society. Holders of a purchased title like the *jiansheng*, for example, had no access to official positions but still constituted a privileged group among commoners, since they were exempt from corvée and the routine prefectural tests in the school system and were entitled to wear the scholar’s gown and cap. They usually were well-to-do people, since they could afford to pay the 100 taels or so required for the degree. A 1725 document, for example, refers to a landowning Christian *jiansheng* from the Huang lineage of Dingtou as “very rich.”²²

Qing authorities’ great concern for Christian conversion among lower-degree holders underscores the important social standing and symbolic influence this group enjoyed. In 1746, the governor of Fujian fumed that “it is not just stupid villagers who are behaving in this manner. Even government students and students by purchase (*sheng-jian*) follow their teachings their whole life, without ever paying worship to the Most Holy Master [Confucius], Guandi, and all the other gods. They have gone to school . . . [and yet] show their back to the Dao!” To counter this disturbing trend, which signified the acceptance earned by

22. Quotation is from Caballero 1639, f. 116r. See Esherick and Rankin 1990, 23, for comments on the special balance of power in peripheral zones, where local elites did not need to have strong connections to the local and central government to exercise influence. A 1723 memorial by Governor-General Gioro Mamboo refers to over ten *jiansheng* and *shengyuan* in Fuan (YZM, 1: 257); a 1734 memorial by Fujian Governor Hao Yulin 郝玉麟 reports the presence of at least ten Christian *jiansheng* in Fuan county (YZH, 25: 692). Missionary sources refer to over 70 Christian literati (*graduados*) in the 1720s; see a 1733 letter by Eusebio Oscot, as quoted in GH, 2: 134. After 1750 we find no references in Qing government memorials to degree-holders. This is probably related to the decreasing number of lower-degree holders among Christians, but also depends on the fact that between the 1750s and the 1830s anti-Christian campaigns in Mindong were rather perfunctory. On the decline of Christian influence among literati after 1630, see Wills 1994a; and HCC, 388 ff. On *jiansheng*, see Ho 1962, 34; and Oscot, “Relacion,” April 8, 1725, in GH, 2: 171.

Christianity in Fuan, local magistrates, with the assistance of some lineage leaders, in 1748 and again in the late 1750s launched campaigns of Confucian “re-education” in Fuan, as we saw above. Major measures included the reconstruction of a local Daoxue academy and the delivery of a number of public lectures against Christianity targeting county students. One local *gongsheng*, who earned his degree in 1749, Zheng Mao 鄭昴, even wrote and circulated a poem against Christianity, which was recorded in the county and prefectural gazetteers.²³

These campaigns, however, did not discourage local Christian literati. Lower-degree holders had little hope of a bureaucratic career. Their degrees granted them cultural prestige and financial privileges. The confinement to life in the local arena presented fewer obstacles to their Christian religious practices and to obeying the church’s prohibitions on “superstitious” rituals that higher-degree holders and officials were expected to perform. Varo remarked that Christian students from Funing and Fuan usually participated only in county-level exams (in the *villas*) and prefectural exams (in the *ciudades*) and, following their admission to county or prefectural schools, could easily excuse themselves from the rituals held in Confucian temples. Due to the high number of candidates in the prefectural seat, their absence went unnoticed, and in the county seat they could bribe their way out. In Fuzhou or Beijing, such absenteeism would have been much more difficult, or impossible.²⁴

Another category of literate Christian men consisted of individuals who never earned a degree and remained life-long *tongsheng* 童生 (student apprentices), that is, private students who never attended a government school. They seem to correspond to “graduates” (*graduados*) in Dominican sources, as opposed to licentiates (*licenciados*). During the Qing, they were required to gain certification in a preliminary examination given by the county magistrate. Anecdotal references on their social status suggest that they were affluent men, married and with family, or occasionally single, who spent most of their lives studying the Confucian curriculum and managing their households’ estates. A 1650 Do-

23. Quotation from a memorial by Fujian Governor Zhou Xuejian, QL 11/9/12 (Oct. 26, 1746), in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 75, 117. On the Confucian campaigns in Fuan, see FAXZ, 98, 134–35; and *Funing fuzhi* 1999, 1213–14. The “Poem Against the Heterodox Western Teachings” (“Pi Xiyang xiejiao shi” 辟西洋邪教詩) is mentioned in FAXZ, 348; and *Funing fuzhi* 1999, 732.

24. See Varo 1671 as quoted in Arias 1893, 175–76.

minican source refers, for example, to a few of these men, among them a well-to-do Christian literatus called Guo Duo-mo 郭多默 (Tomé; b. ca. 1594), at the time 56 years old, a native of Fuan who had converted in 1631 at age 37 and whose “profession was to study his [Chinese] letters.”²⁵

A number of Christian literate men also found employment as yamen clerks and underlings. One of them we already encountered, for example, Tomás Guo Xianjun, was a *yuanli* 員吏 (i.e., a “subofficial functionary,” a generic designation of low-ranked secretarial personnel) in the Fuan county government and was arrested for his faith during the 1723–24 anti-Christian crackdown in Fuan. Guo was wealthy enough in 1724 to be able, together with other local literati, to bribe the magistrate of Fuan in order to avoid the worship of Confucius. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Christianity attracted more and more of these low-level local government employees in Fuan. Qianlong-era memorials attributed the difficulty that provincial authorities experienced in promptly arresting wanted Western missionaries to the “infiltration” of the Fuan county magistrate offices by Christians. The memorials stated that “most of the secretaries and yamen runners (*shuli yayi* 書吏衙役) of that county are followers of those teachings.” Thanks to the inside information available to Christians through these clerks, authorities were also unable to extract truthful confessions from arrested converts, who had the time to concoct a common line of defense. But, most important, these yamen employees, who in late imperial times operated as agents of negotiations and informal arrangements between state and society, for many years provided a buffer between the repressive arm of the state and local Christians. Magistrates often could not understand the local dialect and so depended heavily on these clerks’

25. David Johnson (1985b, 59) believes that the number of *tongsheng* (included in the category of “classically educated male commoners”) in any given locale was relatively large, probably between 3,000 and 4,500 per county. If Fuan had 300–400 *shengyuan* at any given time, the number of active *tongsheng* could have been between 1,500 and 3,000, and the total number including inactive *tongsheng* should have thus been much higher. However, given the economic marginality of the region, the poor state of Confucian schools in the county, and the low rate of success in prefectural and provincial exams, I suspect that classically educated men were fewer in Mindong than median statistics would suggest. On the decline in literacy among *tongshen* in the high Qing period, see Elman 2000, 220–21. On Guo Tomé, see Morales et al. 1650, f. 53r.

expertise to run the government smoothly. In Fuan, these men made sure that their Christian relatives were not investigated by an excessively zealous magistrate, and thereby extended to the offices of the local government the kind of protection that Christian degree-holders and literati guaranteed in local society and within their own lineages.²⁶

Although the literate Christian men described above held positions of authority and exerted a certain influence in local society, the vast majority of Fuan Christians were simple commoners. Their socio-occupational profile in all likelihood reflected the composition of local society at large. Unfortunately we have no statistical analysis of occupations in Fuan until the Republican period. The 1937 Fuan census gave occupational percentages for a sample of local villages, with a total number of employed people at 38.8 percent, excluding children, the elderly, and most women working at home. Men made up 96.3 percent of the workforce. Only 3.7 percent of women worked outside the house, and over 90 percent of this tiny portion of women was engaged in agriculture. Farmers constituted 80.6 percent of the total workforce, artisans 8.3 percent, merchants, shopkeepers, and peddlers 8.1 percent, and other professions 3.0 percent. Unsurprisingly, most people were engaged in agriculture; manufacturing activities and services were concentrated in the county seat and, starting in the Republican period, in the nearby river port of Saiqi. The Republican occupational figures were probably quite similar to those of the late imperial period. The Qing-period Funing prefectural gazetteer confirms that, at the time, Fuan “men toiled in the fields, and women, who were busy weaving [at home], produced the best summer cloth in the prefecture.” Interrogations of arrested Christians by Qing authorities and accounts in missionary letters reinforce the perception that this picture must have been substantially similar for the Christian community, although the proportion of each group is impossible to gauge. Among the Christian men who fell into the hands of the authorities, for example, we find arti-

26. On these yamen employees, see GH, 2: 170; *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 1875–77, 3: 348 (Kouo-yu-Siun; sic); GH, 2: 161–62, note (Koe Hien-kun); Chinese name in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 316 (8-g); and QTS, vol. 1, no. 58, 88, QL 11/5/28 (July 16, 1746). In other cases of heterodox activities in the late imperial period (such as the Eight Trigrams Rebellion of 1813), in fact, yamen runners were among insurgents and sect members; see Naquin 1976, 300–301. On the role of yamen personnel in Qing society, see Reed 2000.

sans, hired workers, carpenters, itinerant merchants, physicians, and farmers.²⁷

Members of a family did not necessarily share the same occupational profile. Given the harsh economic conditions of Ming-Qing Fujian, labor was diversified in a family, and households would generally integrate scholarship, agriculture, handicraft and industrial production, and commerce. For example, Chen Kuiran 陳喟然, a Christian *shengyuan* from Qidong village, had two sons: the first, Chen Shengye 陳聖野, ran a medicine shop and engaged in business, and the second, Chen Wenye 陳文野, was a student, preparing for the examinations and following in his father's steps. The head of this Christian household thus hoped to gain, through degrees and official positions, local or even national influence for one of his sons, but pragmatically assigned agricultural and commercial occupations, which could financially sustain the family and support the relatives engaged in study, to another son. The examples listed in this section show that local Christians participated fully in the complex, layered social fabric of late imperial Fuan and thus were intimately connected to the same networks of kinship and power as their neighbors and relatives.²⁸

Family and Lineage: The Role of Kinship in the Diffusion of Christianity

LINEAGES IN FUAN COUNTY

The presence of degree-holders, literate men, and yamen secretaries and runners among Fuan Christians helps explain how Christian activities could continue and at times thrive despite opposition from hostile sectors of the gentry or government officials. These men were not isolated individuals. As the Sierra census shows, Christianity had by the eighteenth century become a "family tradition" in certain locales of the region. Christian literati were only the most visible threads of a web of

27. For data in the 1937 census, see Miao Pinmei, ed., 1998, 29; on the gazetteer's description of professional roles among men and women, see *Funing fuzhi* 1999, 399; cf. Zhu 1985–86, 2: 462; examples of professions among Christians from AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 769–72 (YQTW, doc. 29, 66–71).

28. On occupational integration in Fujianese families, see Zheng 2001, 44. On the Chen brothers Shengye and Wenye, see AMEP, vol. 435, f. 1016 (YQTW, doc. 33, 119).

converted families. Kinship was, and remains today, a foundational aspect of the Catholic community of Fuan: the families' building of connections both within villages and across villages facilitated contacts and conversions, offered informal spaces in private homes for worship and meetings, and, most important, supplied the best environment for a deep and long-standing localization of Christianity. As contemporary scholars who conducted fieldwork in Fujian in the 1980s observed, "It is a rule among Catholics that once the parents convert, their sons and daughters will also become Catholics at birth. Thus it is sufficient that one person converts in a family for the whole family to eventually convert." The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century experience confirms this generalization and suggests the centrality of kinship in the spreading of religion in local settings.²⁹

Anecdotal evidence shows that encounters between missionaries and prospective converts occasionally occurred outside kinship networks, especially when spiritual crises surfaced. We read in missionary sources that in cases of demonic possessions or sudden illnesses—and often these two coincided—non-Christians would sometimes solicit the assistance of a priest or a catechist. When a special divine intervention was needed to stave off natural disasters or to induce a pregnancy, or when disadvantaged groups, including women, lepers, and mendicants, needed physical assistance or protection, a priest or catechist would also be called. The conduits for contact in these cases were Christian neighbors and fellow villagers, but sometimes the fame of a particularly charismatic priest or *beata* would suffice to attract nonbelievers.³⁰

In addition to these happenstance encounters, recorded as quasi-hagiographic episodes, contacts were mainly occasioned by kinship relationships. Missionary materials and lineage genealogies offer precious data on kinship relations among Christians in several important villages in Fuan county and afford us a glimpse into how Christianity spread along bloodlines. These data come mainly from the eighteenth century because only then did Dominican superiors mandate a periodical statistical report on the mission. Missionary recordkeeping offers a picture of the Christian communities some generations after the first conversions

29. Quotation from Chen Zhiping and Li Shaoming 1992, 93; cf. also Madsen 1998, who reaches similar conclusions.

30. For specific examples of the connection between miracles and conversions, see Chapter 6.

and, once correlated with genealogical materials, unequivocally shows that a large portion of the converts within a village bore the same surname and that converts were connected by blood ties and marriage alliances.

These Catholic connections developed within the complex world of Fujianese lineages. Zheng Zhenman, one of the major contemporary scholars of Chinese social history, distinguishes three types of lineages in Fujian: inheritance lineages based strictly on consanguineous kinship ties; control-subordination (or hegemonic) lineages, based on relations of subordination to gentry members on a territorial basis; and contractual lineages, based primarily on common interests. The first kind, inheritance lineages, featured collective properties only in cases of wealthy descent groups. In most cases inheritance lineages were formed mainly to share, and thus diminish, both the service levy responsibilities entailed by state household registration requirements and the ritual obligations to the ancestors in ancestral halls or at graves. The second kind, the control-subordination lineage, was a transformation of the inheritance lineage arising from economic differentiation among lineage members. Members of a poor branch would either sell off or mortgage their rights to common property to wealthier members of the lineage (usually the elderly and the gentry) and thus avoid their monetary and ritual obligations toward the lineage. Since the rotation of duties became impossible, the gentry assumed the role of lineage managers and gained control over the collective business of the lineage. Corporate property was then used to fund sacrifices and the education of promising members for a bureaucratic career. Rules of conduct were also enforced, and this type of lineage was transformed into a mechanism of political and ideological control and, occasionally, into a military organization. Zheng observes that truly powerful control-subordination lineages were, however, rare, and that their influence in any given locale should not be overemphasized. Finally, contractual lineages were not necessarily based on kinship ties but represented a form of economic corporation, entailing investments in shares (*gufen* 股份). Different wealthy lineages might combine their resources in order to engage in large projects, such as the construction of a temple, an ancestral hall, or other public works. Inheritance and control-subordination lineages were dominant in areas with residually concentrated lineages. When a lineage dispersed, the corporate form of the contractual lineage became prevalent, thereby keeping together people who had some distant relationship to a

common ancestor, real or fictive, even though they resided in different locales. Zheng's general typology is a valid heuristic tool, based on extensive genealogical research, but, as Michael Szonyi argues, in the Ming and Qing periods great variation in lineage organization and practices dictated by the historical context and by local conditions prevailed in Fujian. Lineages in Fuan were no exception, and, as we will see, the development of Christian branches and special Christian practices within lineages over time is yet another form of variance from the ideal standardized model of lineage that neo-Confucian ritualists and the imperial state attempted to foster.³¹

In Fuan county, residentially concentrated inheritance lineages were the most common, as confirmed by the earliest extant gazetteer of Fuan, compiled in 1597: "Since the Tang and Song periods the largest lineages comprising families with officials and illustrious ancestors have taken care of each household [within their lineage], have distributed and shared resources and property, and have not allowed different surnames to settle in their villages."³² Only a few among the largest lineages in Fuan, such as the enormous Chen lineage of Shanghang and the Miao lineage of Muyang, probably developed specialized managerial roles among their gentry members, as occurred elsewhere in the more economically prosperous coastal prefectures of the province, and became control-subordination lineages. Smaller lineages usually resorted to rotation of duties.

The chapter on local lineages in the 1883 edition of the Fuan county gazetteer lists the 35 main surnames, their distribution in various villages and subdivisions into branches, and some historical data on their original provenance and prominent ancestors. Among them, eighteen surnames were represented by at least three different lineages, but some of the largest surnames, such as the Chen, counted up to 25 lineages, spread in as many neighborhoods of the county seat and in surrounding villages. A common surname did not mean that real or fictive connections existed among the holders of that name, although some of the lineages with the same surname but in different locales had originated through fission from a common ancestor after reaching Mindong. In

31. For a detailed discussion of the basic typology of Fujianese lineages, see Zheng 2001, 71–142; for a critique of static and standardized visions of lineages based on state prescriptions, see Szonyi 2002, 197–207.

32. See [Wanli] *Fuan xianzhi* 2003, 32.

their late Qing and Republican-era genealogies, around 20 percent of these lineages claimed that the first ancestor had moved from northern China to Mindong in the Sui and Tang periods; 45 percent in the Song and Yuan periods; and 32 percent in the Ming and Qing periods. The Tang-Song transition was indeed an important phase in the peopling of Fujian, and the increase in population during the Song resulted in the carving out of Fuan as a separate county in 1245 from the pre-existing and larger Changxi 長溪 county. But claims of ancient residence and descent from prestigious northern immigrants by Fujianese lineages have to be taken with great caution. Rather than historical records, genealogies are reflections of a retrospectively manufactured lineage memory. Compilers often invented ancient ancestors or made connections to prestigious lines in order to increase the lineage's local standing, especially in times of great socioeconomic competition, such as the twelfth and thirteen centuries. The claims of prestigious ancestry in Fuan genealogies therefore reflect complex localized politics of dominance that only detailed research could unravel.³³

Unfortunately, comprehensive ethnographic and historical research on Mindong lineages remains insufficient to discuss lineage typologies in greater detail or to understand the historical development of local lineages and their relationship to one another. Recent investigations on a cluster of surnames in the middle Muyangxi 穆陽溪 valley (also known as Lianxi 廉溪 valley in its lower reaches), however, give a sense of Mindong's lineage-dominated environment on the eve of the arrival of Catholicism and offer a context for better understanding how conversion affected relations between lineages and villages. Liancun is, together with Muyang to the north and Lianshou 廉首 to the south, one of the main historical settlements of the Lianxi river valley. According to genealogical records, Liancun was established by the Xue lineage for its proximity to fertile land along the river. The apical ancestor of the

33. On the lineages of Fuan, see FAXZ, 740–56. The eighteen main surnames, in the order offered by the gazetteer, are: Chen 陳 (25 lineages); Guo 郭 (5); Li 李 (6); Huang 黃 (5); Liu 劉 (5); Wang 王 (10); Zheng 鄭 (10); Lin 林 (18); Ruan 阮 (3); Miao 繆 (3); Xue 薛 (3); Zhang 張 (7); Gao 高 (3); Shi 施 (3); Yang 楊 (5); Su 蘇 (3); Zhao 趙 (4); and Xie 謝 (4). The order chosen by the compilers of the gazetteer is likely a reflection of the hierarchical standing of some lineages within each surname in the local arena by the end of the nineteenth century. The quantitative analysis of the 1883 FAXZ's large surnames is based on Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 13–15, and 2009, 28. On the administrative history of Fuan, see FAXZ, 7.

lineage, Xue Lingzhi, allegedly was member of the prominent Xue family from north China, which claimed descent from the Yellow Emperor. The Xue genealogy maintains that the family was obliged to relocate to the south in the early fourth century during the period of civil war and that the head of the family at the time, the high official Xue Heshi 薛賀始, reached Fujian in the first quarter of the sixth century. This is an extraordinarily early date, and a transparent attempt to enhance the history of the lineage retrospectively, as confirmed by a Qing-period genealogy of the Xue. The compilers complained that although the northern families from which they allegedly descended had reached the south before the Tang, no trace of them could be found in the historical record. Ancient sources, the genealogy argued, completely ignored the contribution of northern officials to the early peopling and governance of Fujian. This clear sign that the late imperial compilers of the genealogy were frustrated by the lack of solid evidence about their ancestry suggests that their claims to noble ascendancy were attempts to enhance the local credentials of their clan. The compilers could only claim with some confidence that Xue Lingzhi, sixth-generation descendant of Heshi, had been the first settler of Liancun. According to family tradition, Lingzhi became the first *jìnshi* from Fujian in 705 during the Tang dynasty. Because of his almost mythical status as lineage founder and successful official, he became a tutelary spirit of his and other local lineages.³⁴

The Xue surname's claim to chronological primacy remained undisputed, but another lineage, the Chen, eventually replaced the Xue as lords of Liancun, co-opted the Xue's tutelary deity, and became the repository of their cultural and religious legacy. The northern bank of the Lianxi was dotted with small level areas suitable for cultivation, and the southern bank near Liancun was the site of a traditional market for the exchange of fish and salt that reached regional dimensions by the late Ming period, when local merchants asked the county magistrate to erect a stele marking the place. The market in all likelihood economically benefited the Chen, whose standing had been steadily growing over time, a fact reflected in the earning of fourteen *jìnshi* degrees during the two Song dynasties. Despite a decline in number and quality of degree-holders during the Ming and Qing (two *juren* in the Ming and only lower-degree holders in the Qing), the Chen remained in control

34. See Zhang Xianqing 2003b, 68–69.

of Liancun and its surroundings. Their continued prosperity and numerical growth is reflected by the fact that they compiled a genealogy as early as 1221 (Southern Song), and that they built an ancestral hall at the beginning of the Ming. According to Qing genealogical sources the lineage engaged in recurrent compilations of genealogies, and complex regulations for the management of the lineage were introduced in the early Ming. By the time of the arrival of Catholicism in Mindong, therefore, the Chen were a full-fledged, mature lineage.³⁵

If the Xue had established their chronological primacy in the Lianxi valley and the Chen had simply “piggybacked” on the Xue’s claims by adopting Xue Lingzhi as their tutelary deity, only one mile away along the river in the nearby village of Qitian the Zhao 趙 family tried to outdo their competitors by claiming imperial descent from the founder of the Northern Song, Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤. A Qianlong-era genealogy of the Zhao even included a beautiful portrait of their illustrious ancestor to prove the point. The genealogy describes a steady numerical growth of the lineage over time from the Northern Song on, with the creation of six different branches. But five of these branches had mysteriously moved away or disappeared by the Ming period, leaving only one branch to thrive in the ancestral village. In all likelihood, this branch consciously manufactured its history after the Ming. The Zhao compiled their first attested genealogy in 1506 and built an ancestral hall only in the early Qing. They produced a good number of lower-degree holders in the Qing (over fifty individuals, including, however, many students by purchase).³⁶

A few miles away lived a lineage that, at least until the late Ming, must have been the weakest power player in the valley. The Feng lineage of Sangyang village (today called Shuangfeng 雙峰, very close to Liancun) admitted in its genealogy that, although its ancestors settled in Sangyang at the beginning of the fifteenth century, its members had been able to organize themselves into a full-fledged lineage only during the Jiajing reign of the Ming, under the leadership of the successful official Feng Jie 馮傑 (1485–1565). At the behest of Feng Jie, the lineage compiled its first genealogy in the 1540s. Concurrently, Feng Jie obtained special honors for his ancestors from the state, promoting the rise of his own “Bi” 璧 branch at the head of the lineage. The leadership

35. See *ibid.*, 69–70.

36. See *ibid.*, 70–72.

role taken by Feng Jie's nephew Feng Shiheng 馮時亨 in the anti-pirate resistance of the Wanli period earned him state recognition and further enhanced the branch's dominating position. An incremental growth of the branch's members led to its further subdivision in three sub-branches, and by the High Qing period, the "Bi," through its success and numbers, had overwhelmed the remainder of the lineage. Sixty-seven Feng men earned or purchased lower degrees during the Qing period, and lineage leaders built a freestanding ancestral hall during the mid-Qianlong reign, both signals that the lineage had reached social, economic, and ritual maturity over the course of the eighteenth century.³⁷

This picture of lineage development in a rather small area of a secondary river valley of Mindong shows how competitive the social environment must have been. Struggle over control of the land translated into a long-term battle to accumulate social capital in the local arena, in part through genealogical claims. Whereas well-established and larger lineages like the Chen of Liancun had dominated the economy of the area since the Southern Song period, newcomers like the Zhao of Qitian and the Feng of Sangyang began organizing themselves and competing for prominence only in the mid-Ming period. Their efforts would start paying off only in the latter part of the eighteenth century with the building of ancestral halls, considered among the crowning achievements of a lineage. It is within this ever-evolving environment that Catholicism arrived in the late Ming.³⁸

CATHOLIC LINEAGES IN FUAN COUNTY

After Catholic missionaries and their native helpers started proselytizing, many villagers in the Lianxi valley converted, with the largest concentrations in the Zhao and Feng lineages. In the case of the Feng, for example, conversions began in the early days of Dominican preaching but sped up during the early Qing period and continued apace even during the period of suppression, with an increase from 30 families during the Yongzheng reign (probably around 150–200 individuals) to 534 faithful in 1795. The Bi branch also supplied the Dominican Order one

37. See *ibid.*, 72–73.

38. Data and precise references to genealogical materials on the Xue, Chen, Zhao, and Feng lineages of the Lianxi valley can be found in Zhang Xianqing 2003b, 68–74.

of the most famous native friars, Juan Feng Shiming. In spite of their strong Catholic identity, however, lineage leaders continued to seek official degrees and conduct ancestral rituals. In 1832, an order to two local literati from Vicar Apostolic Carpena to destroy their ancestral tablets provoked a strong reaction and a mass apostasy in the village. The decline of the imperial system, the abolition of the examinations in 1905, and a destructive flood seem to have battered the lineage's economic strength and diminished the centrality of Confucian-inspired rituals by the early twentieth century: in 1936, according to José Maria González, the entire village had become impoverished and all 1,000 inhabitants were Christian, following orthodox Catholic rituals. Thus, until the nineteenth century the Feng maintained a strong attachment to lineage rituals, although the entire village converted to Catholicism (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).³⁹

The story of the Feng illustrates only one of the outcomes of conversion among Fuan lineages. In fact, several local lineages had considerable conversion rates but followed varied paths of historical and religious development. Other influential Catholic surnames mentioned in both Western and Chinese sources are sectors of the Chen of Shanghang ward, and the Guo of Ludou ward (who later established a branch in the mountain village of Xiyin), both in the county seat of Fuan; a sub-branch of a Chen lineage in Qidong village, north of the walled town of Fuan; the Miao and Wang of Muyang village; the Luo of the Outside Hamlet (Waixiang 外巷) in Luojiaxiang village; the Huang and Ruan of Dingtou village; and the Chen of Xiapei 下邳 village. Genealogical, missionary, and government sources are more extensive for some of these surnames and lineages, in particular for the Huang of Dingtou and the Miao of Muyang, who I examine in some detail here.

Thanks to Sierra's 1733 census, we are best informed on the Christians within the Huang lineage of Dingtou, who accounted for over half of the village's faithful. The Huang lineage boasted a long history of local residence. The founder, Huang Jue 黄爵, allegedly established himself in Dingtou in the Longxing 隆興 era (1163–65) of

39. On Christian activities in Sangyang/Shuangfeng, see GM, 2: 332; GH, 1: 516; and GH, 2: 198, 200, 258, 446, 451, 471n55. Joaquín Royo observed in 1733 (GM, 2: 332) that "this village has around thirty Christian families, and there are only two or three households of gentiles, almost all of who get baptized at the time of death." For further details on conversion rates in the Zhao lineage of Qitian, see Zhang Xianqing 2003b, 81.

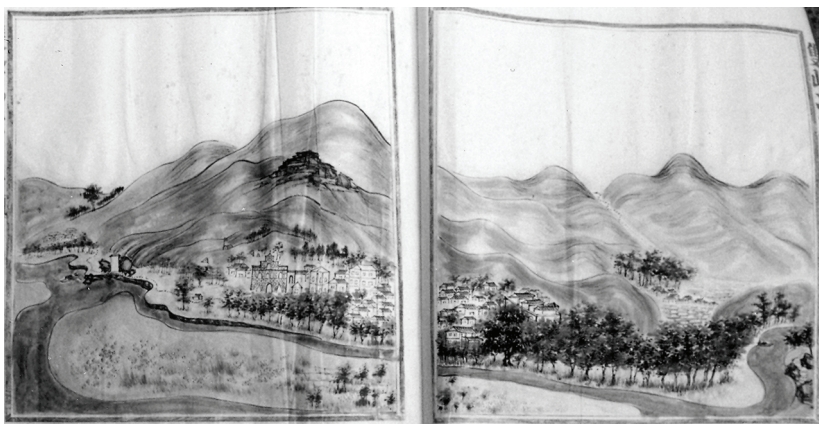


Fig. 5.1 Watercolor of Sangyang village (today Shuangfeng), from a Republican-era genealogy of the Feng lineage (“Shuangfeng Feng shi zupu” 雙峰馮氏族譜, 1939).
A large church on the left dominates the village
(image courtesy of Zhang Xianqing).



Fig. 5.2 A view of Sangyang (Shuangfeng) in 1997, along the Lianxi 廉溪 River.
A new church built in the 1990s once again dominates
the village (photograph by the author, 1997).

the Southern Song period. Within a few generations, during the latter years of the Southern Song, successful descendants who earned higher degrees and official positions led to a splitting of the lineage into three branches, named after Confucian classics: the *Documents* (*Shu* 書), *Poetry* (*Shi* 詩), and *Rites* (*Li* 禮). By the ninth and tenth generations, the *Shu* further divided into three sub-branches and the *Li* into two, a reflection of steady demographic growth and increased wealth. The erection in 1325 of a family temple on a mountain back of the village, where the lineage worshipped the spirits of their ancestors, indicates the Huang's growing wealth. Furthermore, the canonization of a member of the *Shi* branch who had lived during the Song period, Huang Shiwen 黃師文, as a tutelary god of the Huang lineage and the area surrounding Dingtou with the title of Huang shisan shi gong 黃十三師公 further illustrates the strengthening of the Huang lineage's hold over its members and the entire area. This celestial protector added luster to the Huang name, protected its members from misfortune, and even projected his shadow over other lineages. He probably also guaranteed success in the examinations by fostering the ambitions of the young men of the Huang lineage, who started their education in a small, lineage-run school in Dingtou. By the mid-Ming period, the lineage counted between 200 and 300 male members, a number that reached 360 in the mid-Qing. With numbers came increased local influence and a desire to solidify lineage organization further, a common trend in late imperial times. The lineage revised its genealogy five times between the Wanli and Qianlong periods, twice in the Qianlong reign alone (1751 and 1790). In the early 1770s, the lineage constructed an ancestral hall; this represented the final development of a full-fledged lineage as a local "corporation" and entailed financial as well as ritual responsibilities of remarkable magnitude.⁴⁰

40. On the history of the Huang lineage, see FAXZ, 744, and their genealogy "Jiangshou Huangshi zupu" 江首黃氏族譜 (Jiangshou is an old name for Dingtou) as analyzed in Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 137–42, and 2009, 195–200. On early converts from the Huang lineage, see PXJ, 2.31b; Margiotti 1978, 133; and Zhang Xianqing 2005a. On the lineage school, see genealogical records dating to 1804 (Jiaqing period), when a member of the lineage advocated the reconstruction of what he called "a center for the distribution and printing of books . . . to educate the talented men [of the lineage]" (Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 141, and 2009, 201). Missionary sources refer to a "study" (*studio*), where local men in Dingtou learned "Chinese humanities"; see RH, f. 217v, biography of Andrés Huang.

At the time of the Catholic missionaries' arrival in Fuan in the closing years of the Ming dynasty, the Huang lineage had not reached its fullest development. Even though it did not as yet have a separate ancestral hall, its stature is demonstrated by its stratification into branches and by its ability to maintain both a family temple to a tutelary god and a local school. Despite the Huang's roots in local religion and Confucianism, the new Christian teachings attracted some members of the lineage through their contacts with the first few converts of the Jesuits. By the late Ming, male members from all three branches had become Christian. In an attempt to create a more prestigious Catholic genealogy, Huang family lore today attributes the honor of being the first convert to a prominent ancestor belonging to the "Shu" branch, the official Huang Wenji (黃文濟, 1547–1614?). Wenji was instructor in Jianyang 建陽 county (northwestern Fujian) between 1587 and 1599. Unless he met some Jesuit during his studies outside Fujian, however, contacts with missionaries seem unlikely, since at that early date the Jesuits had not reached Fujian. Dominican sources record another individual as the first convert in Dingtou; he is known only by his Christian name, Andrés Huang (?–1648). Around 1633 Cocchi baptized Andrés, who had learned about Christianity from a Jesuit tract. We do know that Huang Wenji's third son, Francisco Huang Yuanzhong 黃元中 (1578–1636?), a government student (*xiangsheng* 庠生) in the local Confucian school, received baptism in the 1630s, as did some of his cousins, including the stipend student (*linsheng*) Huang Dacheng 黃大成 (1595–1676), who belonged to the Shi branch. Even if the conversion of Huang Wenji was fabricated to earn an illustrious pedigree for the new faith, the beginnings of Christianity in Dingtou are undoubtedly linked to the circle of local students being trained in the Confucian classics at the lineage-sponsored school. The circulation of Jesuit catechetical materials among them sparked discussions on soteriological issues. Although most students at the time remained faithful to their Confucian upbringing and rejected the Jesuit discussion of the afterlife as heterodox and troubling, some found in Christian materials and values an attractive response to a personal yearning for salvation. These novel ideas led them to travel to Fuan to meet the Dominicans and be baptized. This trip began a process leading to conversion, which eventually spread to all three branches of the lineage. A century later, the 80 Christian male members of the lineage recorded in the 1733 census—21 in the Shi branch, 37 in the Shu branch, and 22 in the Li branch—

corresponded to around 44 percent of all Huang males at the time. Only a couple of generations after the first conversions, almost half the lineage across the different branches was participating in and transmitting the Christian faith, further expanding Christian influence in local life.⁴¹

Another important cluster of Catholic families could be found in the large village of Muyang within the Miao lineage, among the oldest and most prestigious lineages of the Mushui valley. Miao genealogies identify the late Tang as the period when their ancestors moved to Mindong, where they established at least two branches in the vicinity of Muyang, north and south of the river. The Northern branch thrived and further split into four sub-branches during the Song and Yuan periods. They produced a number of successful degree-holders and officials and established the clan as the undisputed leader of the upper Mushui valley. During the Ming, the compilation of genealogies and the construction of four ancestral shrines reveal the branches' strategy to coordinate their rituals and economic activities in order to bolster their power. The largest genealogy, which encompasses all four sub-branches of the Northern lineage, was compiled in 1577; and, by the 1640s the lineage boasted several thousand members, outnumbering by many times the Wang lineage, which shared part of the village. The Miao lineage owned corporate property and operated water-driven rice mills, which produced income to support the education of its students, who reached the number of 63 during the Ming and 185 during the Qing. Three *juren* and 40 *gongsheng* emerged over the course of the Ming and Qing dynasties, as did more than a hundred educational officials and low-level government employees. The lineage also supported a network of at least six shrines to tutelary gods, including the local worthy Xue Lingzhi, the goddess Linshui furen, the Daoist deity Huaguang dadi 華光大帝, and a divinized ancestor of the Miao clan. By the time Catholicism arrived in Fujian in the late Ming, the lineage had reached an advanced stage of development, both economically and ritually.⁴²

41. On early converts in the Huang lineage school, see RH f. 217v; PXJ, 2.31b; and Margiotti 1978, 133. Riccio (RH ff. 217r-v) narrates how Andrés Huang received from some of the first converts in Fuan a book printed by the Jesuits. After reading it and learning about the Christian ideas on salvation and damnation, he presented its contents to his peers in the Huang lineage school. They, however, rejected his call for a discussion of the afterlife.

42. See data on the history and ritual practices of the Miao lineage from the "Dong Lu Miao shi zongpu" (1936 ed.) and "[Miao] Longgang zhipu" [繆]隆崗支譜

The conversions of one of its most successful members, Miao Shixiang, and two other members of the same Yuan (元) branch of the lineage, Miao Zhongxuan 繆仲選 and Miao Zhaomao 繆兆昴, gave the new faith legitimacy in the local scene. Miao Shixiang eventually earned a *juren* degree, and Miao Zhongxuan and Miao Zhaomao became government students. Descendants of Miao Shixiang remained steadfastly Catholic into the Qing period. Shixiang's nephew, Tomás Miao Tianlin (1674–1743), in particular, challenged the imperial authorities during the Yongzheng reign by remaining faithful to the teachings of his Catholic ancestor. In 1724, after he along with some fellow Catholics had traveled to Fuzhou to defend the legality of Christianity, provincial officials ordered him to denounce his Catholic “accomplices,” prepare lists of converts, and use his morally prestigious position of literatus to discredit his religion “by convincing and leading others to repentance and to the mending of their errors.” In late 1730, however, he was again arrested and forced to abjure, a clear sign that he had “secretly continued to commit his crimes, refusing to correct his mistakes.”⁴³

Within the Miao lineage during the late Qianlong period, we also see the creation of something exceptional: the completely Christian Guisan 桂三繆 sub-branch. Many Miao had converted to Christianity since the late Ming, but Miao Bao 繆堡 (1715–1786; generational name Guisan 桂三), the apical ancestor of this sub-branch, may initially not have been a Christian. According to oral accounts, during the 1746 anti-Christian campaign, Miao Bao discovered that the Dominican Bishop Pedro Sanz (Bai Duolu 白多祿) had taken refuge from Qing soldiers in his area and decided to help him hide. But Sanz was surrounded soon afterward and decided to surrender. He was arrested and deported to Fuzhou and eventually decapitated. On his deathbed 40 years later, Miao Bao dreamed of Sanz and decided not only to be baptized but to have his entire family join the Catholic church. Both Qing sources and the missionary account of the arrest of Sanz differ in important details from the oral account, but, whatever the historical facts, the

(1883 ed.), as summarized in Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 156–57, 159, and 2009, 216–17, 220.

43. Quotations from Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese*, 316 (8-m). On Miao Zhongxuan and Miao Zhaomao, see PXJ, 2.31b; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 160, and 2009, 222. On Miao Tianlin, see GH, 2: 167–70, 217–20; and Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 161, and 2009, 222.

oral tradition dates the origin of this Christian lineage to the traumatic events of the 1746 anti-Christian campaign. In the collective memory of the lineage, the branch has been steadfastly Catholic since Miao Bao's 1786 deathbed conversion. By the Daoguang reign, almost all the sub-branch's members had become Catholic, and in the 1890s they built their own ancestral hall. The sub-branch's self-perception as being historically committed to Catholicism is proven today by a modern painting in the ancestral hall of Miao Bao in prayer on his deathbed. That self-perception is reinforced by the sub-branch's genealogical records, which list men and women who decided to become tertiaries; the women earned the honorable notation in the registers "chaste, did not marry" (*shouzhen buzi* 守貞不字). Miao Bao or his descendants could well have decided to split from the rest of the lineage and establish their own sub-branch in order to avoid the ancestral rituals forbidden by the church and to practice Catholicism without interference. The brutality of Qing repression might have also fueled resentment toward those segments of the Miao lineage that collaborated with the authorities and thus encouraged the sub-branch to seek autonomy from other branches. In any case, by the Daoguang period, this flourishing sub-branch had almost 500 members, and in the late Qing the lineage branch to which the Guisan sub-branch belonged was almost entirely Catholic. Today, over 2,000 of the 5,000 members of the four main branches of the Miao lineage are Catholic, with the highest concentration in the Guisan sub-branch.⁴⁴

The Feng, Huang, and Miao were lineages of varying social standing, with different historical pedigrees and organizational capabilities. Each experienced the vagaries of lineage development in late imperial Fujian, from growth in the mid-Ming, through devastation in the aftermath of the Manchu conquest, to maturity by the Qianlong period. Among the three, the Miao were no doubt the oldest, largest, and most complex lineage, with a well-developed managerial leadership, corporate property, a network of temples to tutelary gods, and educational ambitions for members, who earned degrees in good numbers up to the

44. For missionary and government versions of the story of Sanz's arrest, see GH, 2: 323; and QTS, vol. 1, doc. 68. On the contemporary oral tradition, see Zhang Xianqing 2005a, 125; notations on the status of Christian virgins from the Guisan Miao branch genealogy are mentioned in Zhang Xianqing 2005b, Appendix 2; on the numerical strength of the Guisan Christian branch today, see Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 163, and 2009, 225.

seventeenth century. Battered by the Ming-Qing wars, the Miao never again achieved the prominence they had once enjoyed, but they did remain important players at the local level. The sheer size of the lineage favored splitting into sub-branches, a phenomenon that also facilitated ritual diversification and accommodated the creation of the Guisan Christian branch. The Huang lineage was numerically smaller, did not have an ancestral hall until late into the eighteenth century, and pursued educational success through a lineage school on a much smaller scale than the Miao. Its members won only lower degrees of local import. Limited in influence to Dingtou, the Huang enthusiastically embraced Christianity, as shown by their village's creation of a fleeting Christian enclave during the Ming-Qing transition and by the high rate of conversion among Huang males. The Feng, another relatively small lineage, were the latest to arrive on the scene and reached a certain degree of organization only in the mid-Ming, when one branch clearly came to dominate the entire surname. A strong "Confucian" identity developed and thrived within the lineage into the nineteenth century and went hand in hand with Christian conversion. This coexistence was not without tensions, as the 1832 crisis over ancestral tablets and the subsequent "apostasy" of many literati shows.

Each of these three lineages accommodated Christian values and practices among its members in different ways. In the large Miao lineage, Catholics were clustered in specific families (the descendants of Miao Shixiang, for example) and sub-branches. In the Huang lineage, conversion extended to all branches and enveloped the entire lineage and the village of Dingtou. In the Feng lineage there was an uneasy balance between conversion and loyalty to Confucian education and ritual. How did these processes unfold, within the continuum of lineage development in the Ming and Qing periods?

The History of Fujianese Lineages as a Factor in Christian Conversion

Given the Dominicans' harsh policies against ancestral rituals, the fact that many households within residentially concentrated lineages like those examined in the previous section would convert remains surprising. Ancestral rites were both the glue cementing the ties among lineage members and the instrument through which gentry members of the lineage, who could master the textual world of rituals, dominated other

lineage members. Conversion challenged the foundations of these lineages' power and identity. A look at the history of lineage development in Fujian during the Ming and Qing periods suggests an answer to this conundrum, which is further explored in Chapter 8. In the Jiaping period, Mindong lineages were hit hard by the *wokou* raids, and pirates repeatedly occupied both Funing and Ningde. The raids weakened and dispersed local lineages and concurrently contributed to the militarization of local society, with the building of a number of forts along the coast. During the Jiaping period, for example, pirate raids destroyed the ancestral shrine of the Chen lineage in the fortified village of Liancun, near Muyang. Only in the Qianlong period was the lineage able to reconstruct the hall, originally built at the beginning of the Ming.

However, a period of peace between the 1560s and the 1640s again allowed the development and strengthening of large lineages in coastal Fujian. At this point, the friars arrived in Mindong. It is hardly surprising that lineage leaders fiercely opposed the newcomers' iconoclastic policies. In the 1640s Aduarte underscored the difficulty of penetrating family networks in Muyang:

All those pertaining to one household live in the same [house], parents and married sons, since such is the custom in that kingdom. And due to this fact, conversion is more difficult. If someone desires to be Christian, that person will have all the people of the household and the remaining relatives opposed. As if they were enchanted, the people of the house often have such revulsion [to Christianity] that it is impossible to make them feel favorable [to us]. The only place where the work of the Lord can be done is at the gate of the house, where they have a space to receive guests.⁴⁵

The Ming-Qing conflict was a "window of opportunity" for Christians. The example of the Miao lineage is illuminating in this respect. The "Inscription for the Reconstruction of the [Miao] Ancestral Hall," composed in 1734 by the *gongsheng* Miao Hui 繆誨 and copied into the lineage genealogy, records:

In the initial years of the [Qing] dynasty, [our ancestral] hall was searched, confiscated, and burned by the official Liu [Zhongzao], and afterward we did not see a [common] sacrificial place for almost one century [i.e., 1640s–1720s?]. Only in the shrine of the Wuxi 浯溪 [lineage] branch did they update the ge-

45. On the Huang ancestral hall, see FAXZ, 742. On the peaceful development of lineages between the 1560s and 1640s, see Zheng 2001, 202–12. Quotation from Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 493–94.

nealogies every year, but they did not sacrifice with the rituals of offerings of food and drink, burial rituals, singing rituals, and with the tablets to the ancestors in the proper *zhaomu* 昭穆 order.

Indeed, the period from the 1650s to the late seventeenth century was a time of hardship for the coastal lineages of Fujian. The devastation of the Ming-Qing conflict was followed by the horrendous policy of coastal evacuation, which totally disintegrated many lineages. A number of coastal villages in Fuan county (Luojiaxiang and Dingtou, for example) were evacuated and destroyed, including their Christian churches. It is unclear whether Muyang, the base of the Miao, was abandoned; apparently it continued to be inhabited, even if precariously.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, not until the late Kangxi period were the Miao able to reconstruct the free-standing ancestral hall destroyed in the late 1640s and to reorganize the branches of the lineage into what Zheng Zhengman defines as a “control-subordination lineage,” led by prominent gentry members, such as Miao Hui. Until then, the Wuxi lineage branch revised the genealogy and held sacrifices, but only on a small scale. At this juncture, the lineage suffered from weak organization and a loss of its gentry’s influence; members of the Miao lineage do not appear in the local gazetteer of Fuan as degree-holders until the mid-Kangxi period. One suspects that the Miao’s involvement (willingly or not) in the anti-Qing struggle on the side of the loyalists may have precluded a swift return to official status. But economic hardship also contributed to a slow recovery. The Miao lineage was not the only example of this halting resurgence; the ancestral hall of the Guo lineage, in Ludou ward in Fuan, was destroyed by fire in 1644 and rebuilt only in 1684, after the end of the coastal evacuation. Similarly, the shrine of the Yangtuo 陽頭 Huang lineage, repeatedly pillaged by roaming troops in the last years of the Ming, was reduced to ashes in 1656 and reconstructed only in 1694. The Huang of Dingtou built their first large ancestral hall only in 1773. It is precisely during the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns that Christianity in Fuan had its most spectacular (although not unchecked) development, and the weakening of local lineages played a crucial role in aiding that expansion. If no ancestral hall existed, then the common

46. Quotation from “Dong Lu Miao shi zongpu,” 1936 ed. Miao Hui earned a *gongsheng* degree in 1729 (YZ 7), and was assistant instructor in Youxi 尤溪, in central Fujian, where he edited the local school’s gazetteer; see FAXZ, 347. On the disintegration of lineage power in the 1650s–1670s, see Zheng 2001, 213.

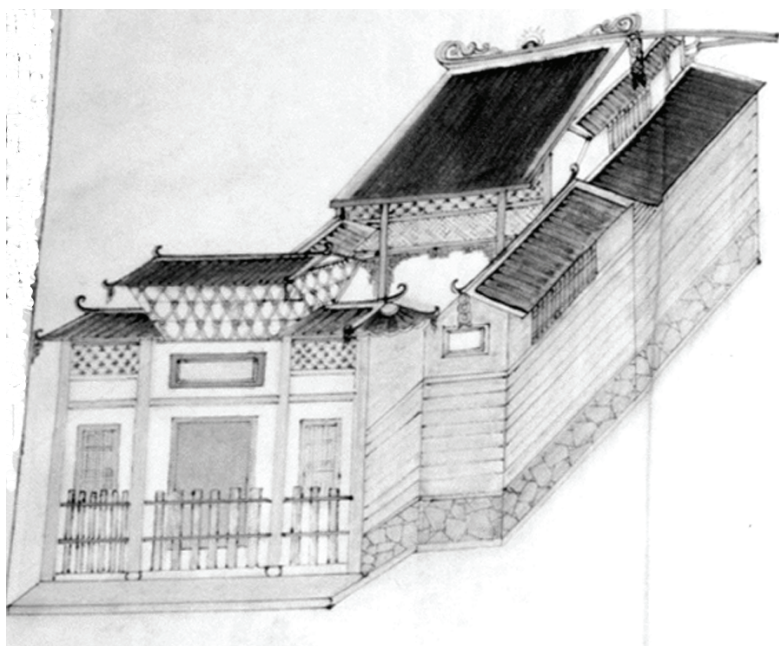


Fig. 5.3 (top) Watercolor of the Wuxi 浯溪 branch ancestral hall of the Miao lineage, Muyang village, from “Dong Lu Miao shi zongpu” (1936); and (bottom) the hall in 1997 (photograph by the author, 1997).

ritual activities of the lineage took place on a small scale, and thus Christians forbidden from participating in the ancestral rites must have felt less pressure to conform to the expectations of their fellow lineage members.⁴⁷

Missionary sources, in fact, indicate that where lineages remained intact during the Ming-Qing turmoil and the coastal evacuation, as in the anti-Christian stronghold of Suyang, the native place of the staunchly Ming loyalist Liu lineage, local gentry and lineage elders were able to enforce strict prohibitions against members' joining Christianity. In the 1660s Riccio noted that

two leagues from Dingtou there is a village called Suyang, whose more than four hundred inhabitants swore . . . not to follow the law of Jesus Christ. They set very cruel beatings as a punishment for the transgressors of the inviolable law of China to give due sacrifices and honors to the ancestors, [and such beatings] were to be performed in their ancestral temple.⁴⁸

The extant genealogy of the Liu lineage indeed contains a rule decrying the social damage inflicted by Christianity on lineage stability and threatening to strike members from the lineage rolls in case of transgression:

Originally, the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven were intended to encourage people to do good deeds. Among its followers, however, many do not sacrifice and forget the ancestors. [If men,] they do not take a wife and discontinue the offerings. [If women,] they do not get married and disregard the [Five] Relationships. To upset the principles of cappings, weddings, and funerals is a great betrayal of the instructions of the Sages. . . . It is wrong to become followers of the Lord of Heaven. . . . It is [thus] correct that all our descendants do not follow [that religion]; if they still do, transgressing the aforementioned [rule], they shall be heavily punished until they reform [their ways]. Those who do not reform shall be struck from the records according to the [regulations of the] genealogy.⁴⁹

47. The first decision to rebuild the Miao lineage hall was taken in 1717, and the work must have been completed by 1734, when Miao Hui was writing; see "Dong Lu Miao shi zongpu" 1936; for lists of Fuan degree-holders, see FAXZ, 304–80; on the Huang lineage hall, see FAXZ, 744.

48. See RH, f. 159r.

49. See "Suyang Liu shi zongpu" 蘇洋劉氏宗譜, Republican period ed., "Appendix: Regulations in 32 Articles" ("Fu li sanshier ze" 附例三十二則); cf. Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 194, and 2009, 261–62. Although these regulations date to 1850, Riccio's testimony shows that the prohibition against Christianity existed in the seventeenth century.

The Liu might have been the first to do so, but they were not alone in trying to prevent Christian influence. In the wake of government anti-Christian campaigns in the mid-eighteenth century, the residentially concentrated Wang 王 lineage of Zhuojiaban 卓家阪 (also called Guilin 桂林, in Muyang), for example, also took preventive measures against Christian conversion, “keeping a book where all the people of the village write their name and sign that they are not Christians, and that they will oppose the Law of God as much as they can.” Similarly, in 1762 the Chen lineage of Liancun added to their “Family Instructions” a rule to safeguard sacrificial and financial duties to parents and ancestors that prohibited members from becoming Buddhist monks or from joining the Christian community. The rule concluded with a stern warning:

The imperial laws forbid [the Western Ocean] Teachings, labeling them as heterodoxy that damages the masses and punishing [their followers] with severe statutes. They are to be avoided at all cost! You shall not be confused by theories of paradise and hell and be turned into treacherous people who are unconcerned about falling into the net of the law. Guard against this, guard against this!⁵⁰

In spite of these anti-Christian measures, however, lineages could really exercise only a heavy psychological pressure on their members and resort to occasional beatings; they were ultimately incapable of stamping out conversion. At worst, they could only expel recalcitrant male members and strike them from the genealogical record. The elders of a lineage in Muyang, for example, decided in 1699 to remove the name of a Christian literatus from the genealogy of their branch after he refused to participate in the ancestral rituals. This was in fact the most severe punishment possible. The consequences could be very serious: after the deletion of his name, the offender not only was formally ejected from the lineage but could be socially isolated and, occasionally,

50. On the Wang lineage's reaction to Christians quoted here, see letter of Alcobér, 1735, in GM, 2: 460; for the text of the rule contemplating expulsion following conversion, see a 1945 edition of the Wang genealogy, “Luofeng Wang ci zongpu” 螺峰王祠宗譜, section “Prohibitions and Sanctions” (“Jin ge” 禁革) quoted in Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 194, and 2009, 261–62. On the prohibition against joining Christianity in the Chen lineage genealogy (“Liancun Chen shi zupu” 廉村陳氏族譜, *juan* 7, “Family Regulations” [“Jia xun” 家訓]), see Zhang Xianqing 2003b, 78–79. The Chen genealogy is dated 1762, and the rule can be seen as a response to the anti-Christian campaigns of Prefect Li Ba in the late 1750s.

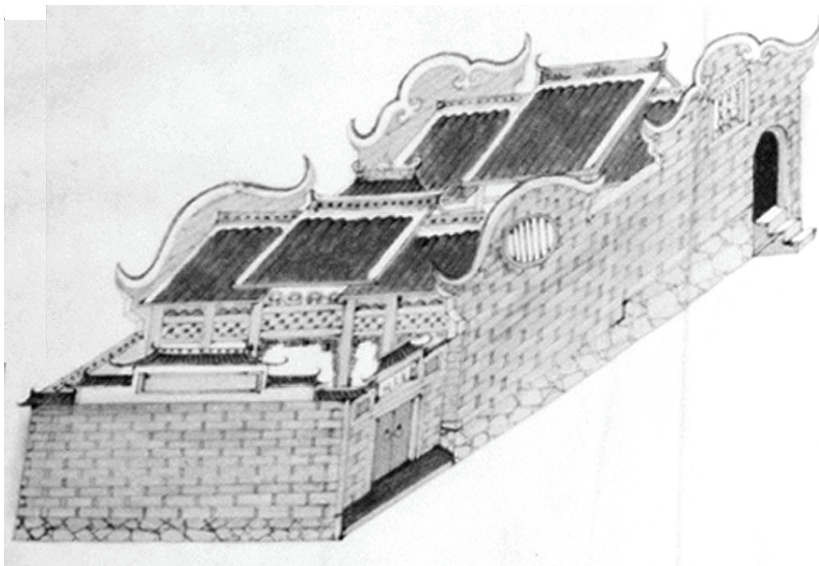


Fig. 5.4 (top) Watercolor of a branch ancestral hall of the Miao lineage, Muyang village, from “Dong Lu Miao shi zongpu” (1936); and (bottom) the hall in 1997, when it was the Station for the Tea Industry of Muyang, Fuan township (photograph by the author, 1997).

even forced out of the community. The 1699 case, however, led to another outcome: a missionary source observed that following his removal, “the literatus was never again bothered.” Another demonstration of the ultimate ineffectiveness of lineage control over religious choice is the testimony found in the Fuan gazetteer about Lian Zhushi 連珠使, the virtuous widow of Liu Xuezai 劉學宰, a Kangxi-period literatus from the Liu lineage of Suyang. The author of her biography claims that Lian Zhushi alone dared to criticize her fellow village women who “kneel in front of the padres (*bale* 巴勒) and pray for happiness and advantages.” Even in the village of Suyang, dominated by the fiercely anti-Christian and residually concentrated Liu lineage, local men were powerless to enforce the ban against Christianity on their wives and daughters.

In fact, in spite of lineages’ ample powers of control over local society, participation in their activities was voluntary. Especially in periods of instability and weakening social structures, lineages functioned as “a service to the practical interests of lineage members,” as Zheng Zhenman puts it. But they were hardly omnipotent in either exacting a system of registration or enforcing economic and social control. Participation in lineage ritual activities, for example, was a privilege not an automatic right, and even less an obligation. Only rich and well-connected men, in the end, were entitled to play important roles in the rites or to organize construction of halls and communal feasting. As observed by the compiler of a Fujianese genealogy in the Jiajing period, “Those who wish to participate in the construction [of our common ancestral hall] should do so; those who do not can do as they please.”⁵¹

Only in the early eighteenth century did coastal Fujian experience a resurgence of lineage organizations, under the leadership and firm control of the gentry. Residually concentrated lineages started rebuilding their ancestral halls. The process continued for a long time, stretching into the Qianlong reign, when a large number of new ancestral halls were built in the region of Fuan. Although the Huang of Dingtou, for example, had been residing in Fuan county since the Song dynasty, they were able to build a free-standing ancestral hall only in 1773. The

51. On the 1699 removal of the name from the genealogy in Muyang, see GH, 1: 627; on punishments against lineage members, see Hui-chen Wang Liu 1959, 44; quotation on the Suyang widow from FAXZ, 490; for Zheng Zhenman’s examples, see Zheng 2001, 284 (quotation); and 286 (on management of sacrificial sites by the gentry and the wealthy).

strengthening of their lineage structure and economic power continued into the nineteenth century and the Republican periods. At the time of the Communist land reform in the early 1950s, almost half (49.53 percent) of all the land expropriated as “feudal land” in Fuan county was labeled “village and lineage corporate land,” an indication of the economic power of lineages in the local arena.⁵²

Interestingly, this strengthening over time did not lead to a tighter control of Christian activities by lineages. For example, in 1754 provincial authorities, as they had already done before, charged the Feng lineage of Sangyang with the task of monitoring the suspicious activities of its members in the wake of discovering the underground Chinese Dominican priest Juan Feng Shiming and his followers. The Feng lineage was at the peak of its power, as epitomized only a few years later by the completion of a free-standing ancestral hall. Yet, as noted in Chapter 4, the Qianlong emperor himself and the Grand Council observed that making the relatives of the culprits responsible for monitoring their activities was a mere formality, not a wise decision. Scholars have repeatedly noted that efforts by Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀, governor of Fujian from 1752 to 1754, and by his successors to entrust Fujianese lineage heads with official functions of social control failed completely.⁵³

The weakening of lineages beginning in the 1650s and continuing into the 1720s offered a space for Christian conversion among gentry and commoners alike. Christianity became the religious tradition of entire families, and parents passed it down to their sons and daughters. By the mid-eighteenth century, even as lineages regained influence, Christianity had become an integral part of village life in places like Dingtou and Muyang. Although these Christian families continued to produce lower-degree holders and included men of some means, they apparently remained marginal to lineage organizations. As Chapter 7 explores in greater detail, Christian families and lineage sub-branches modified traditional ritual activities. Abstaining from certain features of ancestral

52. On the Huang hall, see FAXZ, 744. On the developments in the High Qing, see Zheng 2001, 309; on lineage land in the Republican period, see Miao Pinmei, ed., 1998, *passim*.

53. On Qianlong and his Grand Council's comment, see First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, Grand Council Archives, *Court Letters*, no. 1549–50, QL 19/8/27 (Oct. 13, 1754), also reproduced in *Gaozong shilu*, juan 471, sub QL 19/8/27. On Chen Hongmou's efforts in Fujian, see Hsiao 1967, 349; Lamley 1990, 272; and Rowe 1998, 398, and 2001, 402.

rituality was probably rather painless in areas where Christians were numerous, as in Dingtou, but it definitely produced tensions in other villages, as in Suyang.

*Christian Networks in Fuan County:
New Marriage Patterns and Lineage Alliances*

Christianity also entrenched itself within local society through marriage. Marriage was an important feature of local life in allying nearby villages and lineages. Although marriage among Christian families in different villages was a desirable option, both for religious and practical reasons it remained an elusive ideal for most of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the 1680s Francisco Varo observed that since Christians were so few in number compared to non-Christians, finding a suitable spouse of equal social standing among converts was extremely difficult. By papal dispensation, therefore, customary church law prohibiting marriage to the nonbaptized was not enforced.⁵⁴

The thorniest issue was the fate of Christian women married to non-Christian men. Missionary sources contain references to Christian women in all social groups: virgin girls from elite families; women married into important local lineages; married women in remote rural villages; and widows living with their relatives or, more rarely, only with their children. Before getting married, many of these women lived in Christian families. Since many local Christians were poor, they often married their daughters to nonbaptized men; the enticement of the bride price and the honor entailed in an offer from richer families were irresistible. Although no problem resulted when a non-Christian woman married a Christian man, since in that case she usually converted, resistance from the husband might arise in the opposite case. The only solution, Varo suggested, was for the father of the bride to ask the groom's household to allow her to practice her religion. Such arrangements were, however, rare. Most often the husband's household

54. This privilege was a special temporary dispensation from the Holy See, obtained by the first apostolic administrator of Fujian, François Pallu (1626–84), MEP. Thus, the scriptural “Pauline Privilege,” which allows a marriage with a pagan who refuses conversion to be dissolved, was not used in China at this time. Customary marriages were thus considered valid. This interpretation was also adopted for the Philippines in 1771 by the first Council of Manila; see Excelso García 1972, 66–69; and Touboul-Bouyeure 1989, 960.

forbade the woman to go to church; the woman would still discreetly pray and fast at home and, when possible, secretly meet the priests to confess and receive the sacraments. If a Christian woman was considered for marriage into one of the lineages that observed an anti-Christian compact, she was either rejected or obliged to apostate formally before marrying.⁵⁵

There are indications that, starting in the Qianlong period, Christians belonging to established communities increasingly tried to find matches among fellow believers. Matrimony had created alliances among lineages for centuries. Before the eighteenth century, for example, members of the Feng lineage of Sangyang village had often intermarried with members of the Chen lineage of nearby Liancun village. The Chen lineage had first settled in the region at the end of the Tang dynasty and became one of the most successful local surnames in producing higher-degree holders. The Feng settled in Sangyang only during the turbulent Yuan-Ming transition and, as newcomers, found intermarriage with the more established Chen lineage a winning strategy in the effort to entrench themselves within local power networks. Most of the Feng lineage converted to Christianity by the late seventeenth century; the Chen of Liancun, however, did not. Genealogical materials reveal that, during the Qianlong period, intermarriage between the two surnames virtually stopped. The Feng genealogy records that between the Shunzhi and Daoguang periods, Feng men more frequently married women from established Christian families in villages further away from Liancun but still almost all within Fuan county: in particular, the Miao of Muyang, the Zhao of Qitian, the Luo of Luojaxiang, and the Guo of Xiyin. Concurrently, women from the Feng lineage more frequently married men from those same lineages. These trends have remained unchanged to this day. The phenomenon was due not only to a religious preference on the part of the Feng but also to a hardening against Christians on the part of Chen lineage leaders in Liancun and the enforcement of the prohibition against lineage members becoming Christians.⁵⁶

55. Data are from Varo 1685, f. 28r and f. 30r. Varo does not name the anti-Christian villages, but they are likely Suyang, Zhuojiaban/Guilin, and Liancun, the respective homes of the Liu, Wang, and Chen lineages mentioned above.

56. Data based on the 1939 genealogy of the Feng lineage and interviews in 2002, as tabulated in Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 223–25, 2003b, 85–87, and 2009, 286. Zhang (2005b) observes that a number of wives from the Miao of Muyang and Luo

Among the most coveted husbands for Feng women were the Miao of Muyang, a cluster of lineage branches that, as noted, always included a good number of Christians. According to genealogical records, during the period from the Qianlong to the Xianfeng reigns, the Christian Miao sub-branch, initiated by Miao Bao, intermarried mostly with the Feng of Sangyang, the Guo of Xiyin, the Wang of Kangjiaban 康家坂, and the Zhao of Qitian, all Catholic families located more than ten *li* away. Interestingly, this Miao sub-branch chose to marry with lineages located at a distance and to avoid almost completely intermarriage with the Wang lineage based in nearby Zhuojiaban. Disputes over forestry resources may have played a part in this choice, but religious allegiances seem to have been more crucial. As we have seen, during the Kangxi period some prominent members of the Wang lineage were supporters and patrons of the missionaries and even wrote prefaces to religious tracts. By the Qianlong period, however, that was no longer the case. In fact, the lineage engaged in the construction of a series of lavish shrines devoted to a tutelary god, and no further record of Christian degree-holders from the Wang lineage exists. Rather, we find a rule against Christian membership in the lineage genealogy. The shift affected patterns of intermarriage with nearby lineages.⁵⁷

The clearest and most precise record of intermarriage between Christian families is offered by the 1733 census of the Huang of Dingtou village. All women married to Christian Huangs were baptized. Except for one uxorilocal marriage (a Guo man married to a Huang woman), the remainder of the marriages were virilocal. Male Huangs married women from several Christian families, including the Luo of Luojiaxiang, the Zhao of Qitian, the Miao of Muyang, and the Guo of Ludou ward. From fathers and mothers to sons and daughters, and from one family to another through marriage alliances and across villages and surnames, we can see how Christianity had become, by the eighteenth century, a “family tradition.” As Qing officials in Fujian observed in a 1769 memorial, locals had remained Christian “because their ancestors had already joined those teachings in the past.”⁵⁸

of Luojiaxiang are recorded in the 1813 genealogy of the mostly Christian Feng lineage of Sangyang/Shuangfeng (cf. “Genealogy of the Feng of Shuangfeng: Table of Generations” [“Shuangfeng Feng shi zupu: shixi tu” 雙峰馮氏族譜一世系圖]).

57. Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 227, and 2009, 300.

58. QTS, vol. 1, doc. 142, 292 (QL 34.9.24 [Oct. 23, 1769]).

An additional, albeit limited, supply of Christian brides for Christian men emerged in the latter part of the eighteenth century. With the help of alms from Spain, in 1778 Dominican missionaries started to rescue baby girls abandoned by non-Christian families, placing them in Christian households and covering their rearing expenses. Although many of these girls died soon after adoption, several reached adulthood and married Christian men in their villages or in nearby areas. In a few instances, the friars also used Spanish funds to buy back young Christian girls, sold at a tender age by their fathers to non-Christians (a common practice in Fujian at the time), in order to have them married within Christian circles.⁵⁹

The localization of Christianity in Mindong was indeed shaped by a multiplicity of social, organizational, and environmental factors. Among them, the conversion of pivotal “ancestral figures,” occasionally mythologized by later generations, was a major mechanism in initiating Christian traditions within families and lineages and in sustaining Catholicism against state and social opposition. Historical changes in Fujianese social structures during the Ming and Qing periods concurrently created favorable conditions for the successful propagation and entrenchment of Christian practices and values within those families and lineages. Relying on Zheng Zhenman’s interpretation, I would argue that the first period of conflict between Christians and non-Christians, in the 1630s–1640s, coincided with a period of lineage prosperity dating to the mid-Ming and ending with the Ming-Qing conflict. Both the ensuing misery and the policy of coastal evacuation contributed to the dissolution or weakening of lineages along the coast. The hostility of the Dominicans to ancestral rituals did not engender major lineage opposition, since ancestral halls lay in ruins and large-scale rituals were not properly conducted for decades. When lineages again became influential, Christianity had already become an integral part of the village society in areas like Dingtou and Muyang. Its social niche had been carved. Although Christian families continued to produce lower-degree

59. A detailed accounting document in the Dominican Archives records that in the period 1778–94 the Dominicans spent around 500,000 *chapecas* (Chinese copper coins) to support abandoned girls. The expense to rear (*criar*) a girl from her adoption as an infant to the time of marriage oscillated between 1,800 and 2,900 copper coins; see APSR, *China*, vol. 18, “Varios (Estadísticas),” ff. 44r–46v.

holders and men of some means, they apparently remained outside the lineage organizations, or were at least not obliged to participate in their ritual activities. As Chen Zhiping and Li Shaoming observe from contemporary fieldwork, Catholic members of a lineage usually withdraw from ancestral rituals, occasionally delegating other relatives to take on their duties or participating only in permitted activities, such as the sweeping of the ancestral tombs. Moreover, the fact that Christian lower-degree holders continued to live in the local area probably led to fewer obstacles to their observing Christian religious practices and obeying the prohibitions against “superstitious” rituals. Once this entrenchment had continued over several generations, local society came to accept the Christian community as a compatible element in the socio-religious landscape. Except when the central state precipitated confrontations during anti-Christian campaigns, people got along for decades.⁶⁰

The sociological and historical rationales offered in this chapter, however, are only some of the elements that favored localization. It was the ability of the Dominicans and the local Catholics to *routinize* the Christian religious presence and commitment through individual piety, communal rituals, healing, exorcisms, and religious organizations, discussed in the next chapter, that truly sustained Mindong Catholicism as an individual religious choice and a collective experience generation after generation.

60. On contemporary practices, see Chen Zhiping and Li Shaoming 1992, 93–94.

SIX

Christian Religious Fellowship in Mindong: Priests, Rituals, and Lay Institutions

On June 8, 1651, the feast of Corpus Christi, a crowd of Christians and all the Dominican priests living in Fuan gathered in the coastal village of Dingtou to mark the completion of a monumental, baroque-style ritual compound built with local labor and funds. The literatus Joaquín Guo Bangyong, turned by contemporary events into the commander of the Southern Ming militia of Dingtou, had personally supervised and partly funded the construction of this stone church and priory, inspired by those he had seen a decade earlier during his stay in Manila. In the Spanish empire, including the Philippines, the feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated with high masses and inspired enormous processions. The friars brought this Spanish tradition to Fuan for this special occasion, as is apparent in Riccio's description of the event:

The main altar was richly decorated, and the church and the adjacent priory were hung with tapestries, in preparation for the passage of the procession. In the cloister [the Christians] built four beautifully adorned altars, and in the middle a fine fountain that the Chinese admired very much. The priests sang the mass for the first time, something that the Christians had never seen before,

and Fr. Timoteo de San Antonino [Bottigli] gave the sermon. The host was exposed the whole day in a precious container made of silver brought from Manila, under a velvet baldachin bordered [with trim], with many candles and incense. Choirs of Christians alternated all the time in their oral prayers of praise, chanting the rosary in their customary fashion, in a very devout and pious tone. In the evening they held the procession. All the Christian community of the jurisdiction of Fuan and the nearby towns participated in this famous feast. And almost all confessed and communicated, with such devotion and tears, that the Fathers, who had gathered at the time in that church, felt moved to tears themselves. There was also a literary competition, during which the Christian literati, with much acuity, said admirable and delicate things, writing very elegant compositions in praise of the sacrament. The best poems, some of unusually good devotion, earned a prize.¹

The exotic buildings and the rituals imported from the West were animated with both baroque and Chinese theatricality. The Chinese Dominican Gregorio Luo Wenzhao, a native of Fuan county, coordinated the preparation of the feast with local Christians. A student in the priories of Manila and Macau from 1638 to the late 1640s, he was familiar not only with Western architecture but also with the way religious festivals were celebrated in the Philippines and Macau. Although in 1651 religious objects brought from Manila (like the velvet baldachin or the silver container for the host) were used along with Western vestments, the altars, the tapestries, the calligraphy, the candles, and the incense were designed and produced locally, and procured by local Christians. Amid the smoke of Chinese incense and with the chanting of the rosary in the local tongue, the ceremony seamlessly fused Western and Chinese styles of worship. The procession that the Christians organized in Dingtou lit the obscurity of the night with torches and candles in a way that must have reminded onlookers of similar nocturnal rituals of perambulation celebrated in honor of local gods. Indeed, processions headed by statues of heavenly patrons were a common occurrence both in the Spanish Catholic tradition and in Chinese temple festivals.²

1. Quotation from RH, in GH, 1: 290. On similar festivals in Manila, see D. G. Fernández 1989.

2. On Luo Wenzao, see José Maria González 1966, 25–28. Processions in honor of Chinese gods usually physically marked the extent of their territorial influence. Christians in China, because of the status of their religion, would not engage in public processions outside Christian enclaves until the nineteenth century; for an example of a Catholic procession in the region of Zhangzhou in the 1860s, see Gentili 1887–88, 3: 215.

In Dingtou, exotic symbols and rituals resonated with time-honored local traditions to form a ritual process both novel and familiar, one whose rhythms followed the church's liturgical calendar. If the geographical factors and kinship networks examined in the previous chapter helped shape the development and sustain the survival of the Catholic communities of Fuan county, ritual life, exemplified by the celebrations of Dingtou, supplied the sense of belonging necessary in order to feel an awareness of "community." The three main ingredients of this ritualized Christianity, and the religious elements that sustained communitarian and personal spirituality and practice, were the priests; sacramental and devotional activities; and the community's lay institutions, especially the Third Order and the confraternities.

Catholic priests performed uniquely Christian rites, but they also shared common ritual traits with other local religious professionals. The Dominicans tried to exercise doctrinal and moral control over the community and to impose uniformity in the realms of ritual, doctrinal knowledge, and social behavior, a uniformity for which Chinese religious experts usually had little concern. At the same time, however, priests both reacted to and adapted to religious phenomena already present in local life. For example, they readily accepted the role of exorcists and healers, which tallied with their own theological understanding of the presence of evil in the world and in the body—Chinese gods and spirits being just another manifestation of the devil. The missionaries maneuvered themselves into a world of local religious practitioners who offered similar services, and like those practitioners, the missionaries catered to the needs of locals, Christian and non-Christian alike, who asked them to expel demonic forces. Their successful exorcisms would be among the most convincing signs of the superiority of the Christian god, and Christians promoted this image of success, boasting of the efficacy of Catholic rituals and objects to their non-Christian neighbors. This insertion of the priests into local society helps explain their acceptance by the Chinese in spite of their foreign origin.³

3. As Jesuit, Dominican, and Franciscan missionary sources often report, converts routinely suggested to other villagers the adoption of Christian rituals, prayers, and baptism and promoted the services of Catholic priests to deal with daily problems and demonic possessions. A 1733 report by Eusebio Oscot refers, for example, to a case of possession of a non-Christian in the mountain village of Lingtou 嶺頭 in Fuan county, solved thanks to the recitation of prayers by Christian neighbors, in GH, 2: 143. On "church magic" in early modern Europe, see Thomas 1971, 25–50;

Besides catering to pre-existing spiritual and existential needs of the local populace, the friars also fulfilled a crucial organizational role within the Christian community by supervising important aspects of its daily life and contributing to the creation of a Chinese Christian identity. They orchestrated liturgical events during special feast days; they trained lay personnel in liturgical services and in catechetical education and commissioned them with transporting mail, religious objects, and cash to and from Macau or Manila; they administered the finances of the mission, paid their servants and lay helpers, purchased properties, and shouldered part of the expenses for the upkeep of churches and residences (although Chinese benefactors also offered them support); and they procured or commissioned the creation of religious icons and objects either locally, or in places as far away as Macau, the Philippines, Goa, Mexico, and Europe.

Although successful Christian exorcisms and grand ceremonies were the most dramatic expressions of the new Christian religion, routinized daily rituals and devotions were the more prosaic, and also the more lasting, glue of the community and of personal spiritual life. Daily rituals required few resources and penetrated deeply into the world of personal devotion and family worship. The administration of the sacraments was the preserve of the priest, but lay people were involved in organizing and participating in sacramental liturgies, especially on major feast days. Devotional activities, such as recitational prayer, indulgences, or penances, on the other hand, transcended the power of the clergy and provided a way for the layperson to interact with the sacred on a daily basis, even when a priest was not available. Some Christians enthusiastically adopted devotional activities in order to offset the relative passivity they experienced during the mass. A burning concern for their personal salvation and cleansing from sins, and an equally great concern for the fate of the dead in the afterlife, to whose salvation the living could contribute through their prayers, also attracted Christians to devotions. The high degree of congruence between Christian devotional activities and existing Chinese religious traditions eased the acceptance of Christian practices in Fuan and favored the blending of Christianity into the local landscape.

for a more positive appraisal of “effective rituals” in the medieval Catholic tradition, see Van Engen 1986.

Without lay organizations, however, the practices of individuals could neither build a community nor sustain identity for long. Lay organizations included both logistical groups (lay caretakers, catechists, and messengers), which responded to the educational and financial needs of the community, and devotional and charitable groups, which maintained a stricter commitment to religious discipline. In particular, three corporate religious organizations catered to the devotional sensibilities of the most committed converts: the Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic, the *beatas*, and the Confraternity of the Rosary. Although these groups focused on personal cultivation, they also performed activities more social in nature, such as medical assistance to lepers. Christian organizational and corporate entities, again, showed unique Christian features but also shared commonalities with other Chinese socio-religious organizations.

This combination of forces—the energy of clerical professionals, the lay taste for devotions centered on the family and the neighborhood, and the leadership provided by lay institutions—found sustenance in kinship ties among Fuan Christians and in the individual and collective spiritual yearnings current in the Chinese religious field. Each component helped Christianity become entrenched in local society and made it resilient to social and state pressures.

The Roles of the Priest

Catholicism is a religion structured around the clergy, since only ordained priests can lawfully celebrate the central elements of Catholic ritual: the sacraments. In spite of a chronic lack of personnel, priests played a pivotal role in the China mission and were crucial elements in maintaining a unified identity for the Christian community and imprinting it with a common style of worship.⁴

4. The Catholic sacraments are baptism, penance, eucharist, confirmation, matrimony, priestly orders, and extreme unction (last rites). On the role of the priest in late Ming China, see Zürcher 1997a, 631: “The priest is clearly set apart from the lay believers; only the *duode* 鐸德 [abbreviation for the Chinese transliteration *sa-ze-er-duo-de* 撒責爾鐸德 of the Italian *sacerdote*] has the authority to celebrate mass, to grant the absolution after the confessions of sins, and (except in extreme circumstances) nobody but he can perform baptism” 彌撒之禮，在聖教，非鐸德不行，重其職也；cf. *Kouduo richao*, 3.21a, in CCT ARSI, 7: 220 (Zürcher, trans., 2007, 358).

During his detention in Fuzhou in 1746–47, the Dominican Bishop Pedro Sanz gave an extraordinary confession to Qing authorities that describes, in the language that Chinese converts would have probably used in their explanations to non-Christians, the customary priestly activities punctuating the life of the Fuan Christian communities:

We meet every “purification period” (*zhaiqi* 齋期) of seven days, and on each “purification day” (*zhairi* 齋日 [Sunday]) I sit higher, while all the male believers and the female believers with their heads covered in white cloth worship in a lower position, divided in two groups. I sprinkle their heads with water, [a ceremony] called “baptism” (*lingxi* 領洗). Also, I breathe with my mouth on the face of each man, but in the case of a woman I breathe on her mouth and abdomen using a bronze pipe or a wooden straw, and this is called “[baptismal] exorcism” (*chuigan mogui* 吹赶魔鬼). With just a puff of air, I force the evil spirit out of their hearts. I give to each of them flour biscuits and wine [i.e., the eucharist], and I also teach them to recite the foreign prayers and the Ten Commandments. I make a holy sign in the shape of a character *shi* 十 [ten] with holy oil on the forehead of those who have been baptized and can recite the prayers, and this is called “confirmation” (*jianzhen* 堅振). Confirmation means that such a person shall believe with an earnest heart. When people are about to die, I also touch the seven orifices in the head with holy oil, so that in the afterlife they can ascend to Heaven and on the day following the end of the world be resurrected to life.⁵

Sanz offers a simple picture of a priest’s activities: mass; baptism, including the exorcistic rituals used during the ceremony; catechization; the eucharist; confirmation, which only Sanz as bishop was authorized to administer; and extreme unction. In spite of the condensation and the linguistic interpolations by yamen clerks of non-Christian terms in the oral deposition, Sanz’s confession names the diverse facets of a priest’s role with a certain degree of accuracy. His words, through the scribe’s mediation, describe the ritual and catechetical roles of the priest and illustrate how a priestly presence was a crucial factor for the ritual cohesion of the community. But priests did more than what Sanz described to his captors. We can identify at least three main components of their role: pedagogico-catechetical; ritual and healing; and disciplinary.⁶

5. AMEP, vol. 436, ff. 147–48 (YQTW, doc. 34, 131–32); in the confession of the Christian Guo Hui ren, a similar description of priestly activities is found again, see *ibid.*, f. 152 (YQTW, doc. 34, 136).

6. A good picture of daily mission life in the seventeenth century is offered by the account book of the Jesuit François de Rougemont, see Golvers 1999. The best

Oral and Written Instruction

The imparting of religious instruction—or what in Christianity is called “catechesis”—was the main pedagogical duty of the missionaries. The Greek word *katechesis* means “instruction by word of mouth,” notably by questioning and answering. Catechesis commonly meant instruction in the elements of religion, particularly preparation for initiation into Christianity. Oral instruction was the first step in contacting prospective converts and central in the life of the mission. The Dominicans in Mindong soon learned through trial and error that the Jesuit approach to preaching and instruction, for which they initially harbored strong skepticism, was indeed the most effective. In the initial phase of their ministry in China, the Jesuits had first practiced with great success the art of “learned conversations” with Chinese literati, Christian and non-Christian. In Fujian, the Jesuit Giulio Aleni had been a master of this technique. Between 1625 and the mid-1630s, he engaged in Christian-Confucian philosophical debates with important non-Christian scholars. He was thus able to attract the attention of literati, including those who became the first Fuan converts. After 1630, however, he concentrated his teaching activities on devout Fujianese Christian lower-degree holders, as testified by the famous *Diary of Oral Admonitions* (*Kouduo rìchao* 口鐸日抄, 1640s). The Jesuits, building on their experience in rural Europe, concurrently developed proselytizing techniques to be used among semiliterate and illiterate commoners in the Chinese countryside. The routine of itinerant Jesuits included display of sacred images on makeshift altars, preaching about the main tenets of Christianity, distribution of catechetical materials in Chinese, and the organization of classes for children and adults for the memorizing of the Ten Commandments and the main prayers. These forms of instruction, conducted for the most part within homes, were critical in the quest to gain new converts and to inculcate Christian religious and moral tenets among the catechumens while controlling their fundamental orthodoxy during periodic tours.⁷

source on pastoral in the eighteenth-century mission is the diary of André Ly, a Chinese priest stationed in Sichuan most of his life, and associated with the MEP (Launey ed., 1924); for analyses of it, see Borer 1945 and Serruys 1976, 40, 48.

7. For a discussion of the Jesuit methods of religious proselytization in China, see Brockey 2007, 287–327.

At the beginning of their work in Fuan in the 1630s, the friars, including both Dominicans and Franciscans, did not follow the prudent Jesuit method and ended up attracting the hatred of opponents and provoking resentment among converts. One behavior that most incensed the Chinese public was the friars' street preaching. Inflamed by a desire to publicly confess their faith, the friars were willing to suffer martyrdom whenever they felt that the honor of the Christian faith was imperiled, as it was, they deemed, in the attacks by authorities and local gentry. The friars' religious rhetoric and cross brandishing provoked a series of incidents that ultimately brought about the 1637–38 anti-Christian campaign in Fuan. The friars found a theological underpinning for public preaching in Aquinas's teaching about the duty to openly confess one's faith. Even after several misadventures, the first group of Dominicans continued to believe that it was their responsibility to speak out whenever officials prohibited and defamed their religious faith. In the early spring of 1638, for example, Francisco Díez, who had been hiding in Dingtou following the enforcement of anti-Christian measures in the territory of Fuan, "seeing himself locked up [in the house of Christians], and that he could not preach according to what his perfervid spirit and inflamed zeal suggested to him," succeeded in convincing his superior Morales that the two of them should don white robes as in the Dominican tradition, a color that signified mourning in China, and travel to Zhejiang. There, in the cities of Suzhou and Changshu, the two "entrusting themselves to the hands of Divine Providence, started to preach in public, each carrying openly in his hands a holy Christ painted on a cross." The expedition ended in disaster: the friars were shipped back to Fujian by the Jesuits and the local Christians and expelled from China. This epilogue finally convinced the Dominican authorities in Manila to follow a more cautious pronouncement, also found in Aquinas's writings, on the opportunity of public preaching among pagans. In 1648, Juan García received a letter from his provincial ordering the missionaries to refrain from fomenting public unrest with their oral confrontations with authorities.⁸

8. Quotations on Dominican public preaching are from RH, 104r–v; cf. GH, 1: 149–50; Biermann 1927, 206–7; and Jennes 1975, 44. Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, "Secunda Secundae Partis" (Second part of the second part), question 3, article 2, reply to objection 2, states that "in cases of necessity where faith is in danger, everyone is bound to proclaim his faith to others, either to give good example and encouragement to the rest of the faithful, or to check the attacks of unbelievers." The

The friars, forced by circumstances to abandon the method of open confrontation, adopted the Jesuit strategy of conducting instruction only in the church or in private houses. In 1675 the Franciscan Augustin de San Pascual, stationed in Ningde near Fuan, observed that the practice of indoor preaching was by then fully established in Mindong: "In China we do not preach on the streets or squares, but indoors. The gentiles come, and we receive them in the house with courtesy, according to their fashion, and in the hall we preach the Gospel. They argue and offer their doubts. And this is the best way we have had to preach in China."⁹

Moreover, the Dominican superiors tried to select less impetuous and more learned friars for the Chinese missions. Writing in 1667, Francisco Varo recommended that new ministers sent to China "be virtuous, bent on learning, and naturally suave." He further specified:

To be virtuous is the most important attribute, although to be proficient in letters is equally crucial. The Chinese are not like the *indios*, who are convinced with any reason. On the contrary, [the Chinese] argue and reply to our responses, and if our answers do not sufficiently satisfy them, they turn into great disputers and conclude that our law is not different from their sects. . . . It is not the same to be a minister of the *indios* and to be one here in China. The Jesuit fathers have understood this well, and they have sent to this kingdom learned men and also some who had studied theology in their order, since they know how necessary letters are in China.¹⁰

This admission by Varo, the foremost expert in Chinese language and etiquette among the seventeenth-century Dominicans, was an open acknowledgment of the need to adapt to China and follow the Jesuit method, at least concerning instruction. Peaceful, restrained reasoning and the teaching of Christian doctrine in appointed places for non-Christians, as well as in sermons for Christians at church, came to completely supplant preaching in public.

reply to objection 3, however, adds that "there is nothing commendable in making a public confession of one's faith, if it causes a disturbance among unbelievers, without any profit either to the faith or to the faithful"; see Aquinas 1920, II.II.2 and 3 (online version).

9. See Cummins 1993, 103; Biermann 1927, 207; and letter of San Pascual in SF, 3: 422, July 29, 1675.

10. Varo, letter to the Provincial Fr. Juan de los Angeles, Dec. 5, 1667, APSR, *China*, vol. 7, f. 87r; a similar passage in another 1667 letter by Varo can be found in Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1074, ff. 289r–289bis/v.

In the Mindong mission, oral instruction for Christians consisted of preaching about the scriptures before or after mass and special instruction through catechetical sermons (*pláticas*). Preaching and *pláticas* consisted of hortatory speeches on the lives of saints and explanation of stories from the scriptures. We have only fragmentary information on the contents of such preaching, which must have been based on the limited number of books that the mission owned, mostly in Western languages. By the eighteenth century, the friars had created a small library in Fuan, seized by Qing authorities in 1746. Besides a few Chinese-language Christian texts, officials mentioned a total of 202 “small and large foreign scriptures” (*fanjing da xiao ben* 番經大小本) divided among the underground churches of Qidong, Fuan, and Muyang. Quite likely, many of these books were collections of sermons for the various liturgical seasons, lives of the saints, and spiritual and pastoral treatises like those preserved in great number at the nearest Dominican library, in the Colegio de Santo Tomás in Manila. Letters by China Dominicans, in particular, mention readings used for the priests’ spiritual growth and as inspiration for preaching. Luis de Granada’s *Simbolo de la fé* was one of the preferred titles of Francisco Díez in the 1640s and a text already translated into Minnanese by the Manila Dominicans. In the 1660–1670s, Varo found inspiration in commentaries to Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* and in Aquinas’s *Contra Gentiles*, as well as in the *Simbolo* of Granada, for the writing of his own catechism, *Clear Proofs of the Holy Teachings* (*Shengjiao mingzheng*), and likely also for his preaching. Theological commentaries of the sort Varo used were not only useful to counter objections from non-Christians and to compose catechisms but also offered material on sacramental and liturgical matters. Aquinas’s *Summa*, for example, besides other subjects, covered the life of Christ and the sacraments.¹¹

11. On the volumes seized in 1746, see AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 771r–72r (61 volumes in Qidong, 103 in Guanpu, just outside Fuan, and 38 in Muyang; cf. YQTW, 71). On the books on canon law and theology kept at the Colegio de Santo Tomás (today’s University of Santo Tomás, UST), see UST Library 1968a, 1968b, 1969a, and 1969b. It should be noted, however, that the present UST collection reflects the general situation of ecclesiastical libraries in Manila before 1800 rather than the Dominican collection alone, since it incorporates the Jesuit libraries suppressed in 1783; see Vicente Hernández 1996, 51, 94–96. On readings in the mission, see Juan García 1649b, 29, and GH, 2: 132, where Blás de Sierra observes in a letter dated Jan. 9, 1722, from Luoyuan that the catechism of Varo is based on “the first part [of the *Summa*] and the *Contra Gentiles* of our Father Tomás, as well as the *Simbolo de la*

Eleven Chinese-language Christian books confiscated by Qing authorities in Fuan in 1746 reflect the range of religious topics that local Christians might have learned in their own tongue. These texts indicate that the two priorities for Dominican missionaries were the fundamental teachings of the faith and the dissemination of pious stories and devotional practices, all linked to the liturgy of sacraments and to the calendar of saints. The books included meditations on the Gospel readings for each Sunday and the major feasts (e.g., Manuel Dias, Jr.'s *Explanations of the Holy Scriptures*, *Shengjing zhijie* 聖經直解); stories of the life of the Virgin and of her miracles (e.g., Alfonso Vagnone's *Life of the Holy Mother*, *Shengmu xingshi* 聖母行實; Niccolò Longobardo's work of the same title; and Arcadio del Rosario's *The True Peace of Humankind*, *Renlei zhen'an* 人類真安); and lives of saints (e.g., González de San Pedro's *Deeds of Saint Rosa of Lima*, *Shengnü Luosa xingshi* 聖女羅洒行實). In all likelihood, the friars used these texts in preparing Chinese-language sermons.¹²

fé of the Venerable Father Luis de Granada." In 1667, Francisco Varo himself reported to the provincial in Manila that "here we only have the parts of St. Thomas [i.e., the *Summa*] without commentary, and the *Contra Gentiles*. We need some commentaries on the first section of the second part of St. Thomas"; see Varo, Letter to the Provincial Fr. Juan de los Angeles, Dec. 5, 1667, in APSR, *China*, vol. 7, f. 86r. On Granada's translations into Chinese, see Beckmann 1968, as well as Loon 1966–67 (which is based on Navarrete). On the various readings of Aquinas's *Contra Gentiles* as a missionary handbook or an apologetic work of Christian philosophy based on natural reason against Averroism, see Hibbs 1995, 9–14.

12. Varo (1671; in Arias 1893, 178n2) tells us that Dominicans often preached to Christians about the "lives of saints." According to the confession of the arrested Dominican Juan Alcober, the books confiscated in Fuan had been the property of Francisco Varo (YQTW, doc. 33, 104); they were authored by Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians, and all were published between the late Ming and the Kangxi periods. They fall into the following categories: catechisms in various degrees of sophistication (three titles), the life of the Virgin Mary and the devotion of the rosary (three titles), the lives of saints (one title), the sacraments (one title), meditation and prayer (one title), scriptural commentary (one title), and Scholastic philosophy (one title). The list of books, contained in the provincial-level interrogations of some arrested Christians, is preserved in AMEP, vol. 436, f. 151r (YQTW, doc. 34, 130). The books, grouped by the authors' membership in religious orders are:

Dominicans: Varo's *Shengjiao mingzheng* (1720?), del Valle's *Xingshen shiyi* (1673), del Rosario's *Renlei zhen'an* (1700), García's *Tianzhu shengjiao rumen wenda* (1642), González de San Pedro's *Shengnü Luosa xingshi* (1706).

Among the Chinese-language materials found in the confiscated Dominican collection, we find no trace of the Confucian classics and commentaries usually kept by Jesuits. Yet, Varo's call for learned friars reveals how important a basic understanding of the language and literature of China was for the Europeans to function as ministers. The abilities to impart instruction orally and to engage effectively in debates with the Chinese "great disputers" were job requirements. Dominicans usually learned at least two languages. The first was *guanhua* 官話 (i.e., the variety of Mandarin spoken in the old Ming capital of Nanjing), used to communicate among officials and literati, and to preach with some elegance to educated Christians and "gentiles." As Varo commented, the use of this elevated language was meant to avoid "tiring them with coarse speech, [so that] they [would] listen to it with pleasure, and through the clarity [of the language] they [would] understand the principle of the doctrine preached to them." *Guanhua* might have been used because it was considered a more solemn language and thus more suitable for ritual occasions. The second idiom the missionaries used was the local patois, which they called *lengua hiantana*, that is, *xiangtan* 鄉談 (local parlance). This was defined as "a rustic tongue that only the natives of that territory understand." *Xiangtan* was used for ordinary, daily life and for preaching and confessing "women and villagers, who do not comprehend Mandarin." By learning the Fuan dialect, the Dominicans could communicate with people throughout Funing. Given the geographical concentration of their mission and ministry among local commoners and women, they usually attained a better grasp of the patois than most Jesuits, who instead spoke primarily Mandarin. When in 1671 Varo shared living quarters with the Jesuit Antonio de Gouvea in Fuzhou, for example, he realized that the Jesuit could speak only Mandarin, which prompted many parishioners to flock to the friar for confession, saying "I want to confess with you, since I can understand you, and you understand me."¹³ The Dominicans' need to segue from

Jesuits: Aleni's *Shengti yaoli* 聖體要理 (1641), Manuel Dias, Jr.'s *Shengjing zhijie*; Vagnone's *Shengmu xingshi* (1631), and Longobardo's *Shengmu xingshi* (n.d.; see "Adaptations," no. 43; no longer extant?).

Franciscans: de la Piñuela's *Moxiang shengong* 默想神功 (1694).

Augustinians: Ortiz's *Shengjiao qieyao* 聖教切要 (1705).

13. All quotations on the Chinese modes of speech are from Varo 2000, 17, 19, with my modifications to the English translation based on the Spanish original; cf. also Coblin 2006, 18–19. Varo's assessment of the Dominicans' linguistic

one linguistic milieu to another is also confirmed by the linguistic multilayering of some of their written texts. The Dominican catechisms printed in Manila, for example, mingled colloquial southern Min, literary vernacular, and the classical language.¹⁴

As noted above, the friars were initially very bold in their public preaching and in approaching non-Christians. By the mid-seventeenth century, they had become quite guarded. They first instructed the catechumens in the main articles of faith. Only later did they specify which Chinese practices were forbidden to Christians. Varo observed in a 1671 report:

We [missionaries] touch on these points [of the Chinese rites forbidden to Christians] only after they have been well instructed in the fundamentals of our Holy Law and the articles of faith, and when they show a clear desire to be Christians. Then according to the condition of each person, before baptizing them, we distinguish what is allowed and what is forbidden among such ceremonies . . . and up to now, I have seen no catechumen renouncing baptism for

capabilities is quoted in GH, 1: 394n19; cf. Varo 2000, 255. Navarrete reports that Fr. Juan García, was “very consummate in both languages, Mandarin and *hiantana*”; see GH, 5: 30. Fr. Raymundo del Valle spent two and a half years in Fuan (1655–58) learning both *guanhua* and the local dialect and becoming fluent (*cabal*) in both; see Varo 1686, f. 347v; and GH, 1: 514. Younger friars like Varo had an easier time learning the patois than older ones. Bishop Pallás, who arrived in China already in his fifties, wrote in 1758 that although he could speak the Fuan dialect passably well after a year, in confessing people he still had “to overcome the difficulty of listening [comprehension], which is the major obstacle in these languages”; see Pallás’s letter of August 18, 1758, quoted in GH, 2: 544n8. On the Jesuit Gouvea’s lack of knowledge of the Fuzhou dialect, see Varo 1678, f. 338v. On the learning of *guanhua* imposed in Fujian on examination takers by imperial order during the Qing period to remedy their bad pronunciation, see Paderni 1988. Linguists consider the Fuan dialect as the representative dialect of northern Mindong (Funing). The Funing patois, however, is of limited use in Fuzhou, although most people in the Mindong northern dialect area understand and can speak some Fuzhou dialect today (see *Fujian shengzhi: fangyan zhi* 1998, 17). Nevertheless, Norman (1991, 353) observes, “There are considerable differences between Fuzhou and the dialects to the north such as Fuan, Ningde and Zherong and it is doubtful whether they are fully mutually intelligible.” Western linguists call the northern Mindong dialect “Funing,” since it covers the territory of the old Funing prefecture; see Wurm et al. 1988, language map B12; and Norman 1977–78 and 1988, 235.

14. See Yue 1999, 44–45. This practice can also be found in Daoist scriptures written in prestige Northern Mandarin and interspersed with Min vocabulary and structures; see Lien 1995. On Min influence over written Catholic catechisms in the Philippines, see Loon 1966–67, Yue 1999, and Chappell 2000.

this reason. And even though we often preach to the gentiles, we never mention these matters to them [at that stage], since there is no need to discuss such things with people who have yet to show a desire to be Christian.¹⁵

This selective approach to religious instruction was abandoned post-conversion, with full entry into the community. Before Sunday mass, the friars divided their congregations into two groups, instructing each to recite a rosary in choirs. The friars or lay catechists would also then lead a session of catechism, followed by questions on the faith. At times, oral instruction was held in a very informal atmosphere, as a form of recreation. In one particular case in the 1720s, the missionary Francisco Serrano visited a Christian family where three elderly *beatas* lived “to talk to them about some examples [from the Gospels or the lives of saints] and doctrine, as a sort of amusement.”¹⁶

Oral instruction, however, was only one part of the catechetical strategy employed by the friars. In the China mission, instruction through the written word had always been very important and facilitated the spread of Christianity into regions that the missionaries never physically reached. Before the friars’ arrival, Jesuit books, for example, had reached Fuan in the late 1620s and early 1630s. Local Christian literati had brought Christian tracts back from their travels to Fuzhou and reprinted them at their own expense. The Dominicans later used some Jesuits’ books, either directly or as inspiration in writing their own books, but they also destroyed those they deemed “erroneous and idolatrous.” Although most friars never attained a high level of proficiency in written Chinese, they nevertheless produced a number of Christian books with the help of their literate converts, and Chinese Christians repeatedly requested new printings of these books and provided the necessary financial support.¹⁷

15. Varo 1671, as quoted in GH, 1: 400.

16. On recitation of the rosary, see Cummins 1993, 103; on Francisco Serrano, see GH, 2: 140, quoting a 1733 letter from Eusebio Oscot.

17. For an overview of the Jesuit “apostolate through books,” see HCC, 600–604. On the destruction of Jesuit books at the hands of Dominicans, see a 1648 letter by Juan García, who reported that “I burned and reduced to ashes [some Jesuit books], because they contained errors and idolatries,” probably a reference to Yang Tingyun’s *Daiyi pian* 代疑篇, criticized by Morales; see Biermann 1927, 209n12. However, García had no scruples in using a number of Jesuit catechisms in compiling his own catechism, *Tianzhujiao rumen wenda*; see HCC, 611. On literati reprints of Christian tracts in Fuan, see “Littera Annua” of 1627, Biblioteca da Ajuda,

Juan García authored the first Dominican book in Mindong. His colloquial catechism, *Tianzhu shengjiao rumen wenda* (1642), partly copied from Jesuit models, was written “in a language simple and suited to the common people.” Francisco Varo and Francisco González de San Pedro (?–1730) authored more elaborate catechisms during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the 1680s, with the encouragement of the literatus Zhu Shi 祝石 from Lanqi (Jinhua prefecture, Zhejiang), and with some assistance from Li Jiugong in Fuqing, as well as Wang Daoxing and Wang Daosheng in Muyang, del Valle published in Funing a hefty tome in literary Chinese on the meaning of soul and body, based on Aristotelian ideas developed in Aquinas’s *Summa*. Even during the 1740s, a period of anti-Christian suppression, Bishop Sanz was able to have some blockcarvers from Jianning prepare a new edition of an older work and to have some of his new catechisms and liturgical calendars published and distributed.¹⁸

Local literati converts also saw written texts as an important means of instruction. In a preface to González de San Pedro’s *Shengnü Luosa xingshi*, the Muyang *en-gongsheng* Wang Daoxing endorsed the efforts of the Dominican translator of the biography, observing that “although people might have difficulty in following the path [of St. Rosa], [through this book] they will at least learn about such a famous [flower] in the garden of [our] Holy Teachings, so that they can absorb the fragrance in excess [of that flower] and be helped in avoiding worldly

Jesuitas na Ásia 49-V-8, f. 188r. On the Christian funding of publishing projects later on, see, e.g., the case of Varo’s catechism, *Shengjiao mingzheng*. The book, written in the 1670s, could not be published by the author for lack of funds at the time and appeared for the first time only in 1720, through the fundraising efforts of Fuan Christians; on Varo’s lack of funds, see HCC, 602; on the 1720 edition, see GH, 2: 131–32, quoting a 1722 letter by Fr. Matheu: “[This book was printed because of] the pleas by some of our Christians from Fuan, who asked for it and paid for the printing too. . . . All this matter was managed by the Very Reverend Fr. Magino [Ventallol], at the expenses of the Fuan Christians.”

18. Varo 1903; González de San Pedro 1706a. Quotation from Navarrete’s *Controversias antiguas y modernas de la mission de la gran China*, Madrid, 1679 (incomplete printed edition), cited in GH, 5: 30; see also HCC, 611. See GH, 5: 72; and GM, 2: 57, letter by Sanz to Miralta, Muyang, October 29, 1740. Funing prefecture had no printing industry, and most editions were prepared in Fuzhou or elsewhere (cf. Xie and Li 1997, 423–26). Sanz had to look as far as Jianning in northwestern Fujian to find suitable artisans.

things and disperse the corruption [of the world].”¹⁹ Similarly, in the contemporary preface to González de San Pedro’s catechism, *Shengjiao cuoyao* 聖教撮要, Wang expressed the hope that by reading such catechisms “people [would] set their course, avoiding evil and pursuing good in their lives.”²⁰ The power of these books was not lost on literate tertiaries, men and women alike, who became “very well versed in the books of . . . [the Christian] religion” and went on to teach their contents to illiterate converts.²¹

Healing and Exorcism

Following Catholic tradition, the priest remained central in the sacramental rites of baptism, eucharist, confession, and extreme unction.²² It was, however, mainly in the roles of healer and exorcist that he competed directly with other ritual specialists in the local arena, and an exploration of these identities illuminates how the Dominicans came to fit in the religious landscape of Fuan. Chinese religious experts traditionally performed exorcisms against ghosts, evil spirits, and unpredictable gods, all of whom could cause calamity for the individual or the community. Although most deities punished only wrongdoings and thus were subject to a verifiable rationality, demons were hungry souls in search of revenge and struck indiscriminately and without mercy. Since most Chinese considered deities and demons directly responsible for disease and epidemics, one clear sign of demonic influence over an individual was illness. The ubiquitous presence of demonic forces in people’s lives made spiritual healing part of daily life in the Ming-Qing period. In the prefectural gazetteer of Funing, an eighteenth-century

19. González de San Pedro 1706b, preface by Wang Daoxing.

20. Ibid.

21. On literacy among male tertiaries, see, e.g., the necrology of Raymundo Miao “Tining” (d. ca. 1743), where he is praised for being learned in the books of Christianity (“in libris fidei christianae et legis Dei apprīmē edoctus”; *Acta* 1877, 289). On the *beatas*’ use of Christian books, see José Calvo, letter of Nov. 1, 1772, as quoted in GH, 2: 538–39; letter of Juan Alcober, Feb. 18, 1748, in GM, 2: 535.

22. Marriage, although considered a sacrament at least since the twelfth century, remained outside the purview of the missionaries in China. The lack of priestly control over marriage stemmed from practical issues (danger during persecutions, Chinese marriage customs, limited number of priests) and also from canonical controversies on the validity of mixed marriages and marriages between “infidels”; see CE, vol. 9, “Marriage, Sacrament of”; and Collani 2001.

description of Fuan customs mentions that the locals “still follow demons and mediums” and adds that “they also continue to worship the Lord of Heaven,” inextricably linking the local penchant for traditional forms of spiritual control with the new teachings imported from the Western Ocean regions.²³

In late imperial China, a great number of people were involved in large-scale public exorcisms, performed to keep in check the spiritual world of gods and ghosts and its influence on entire communities. Public exorcisms were part of ritual operas, Daoist *jiao* 醮, and Buddhist and Daoist funerary rituals, activities sponsored by lineages, local temples, or the state. But in small villages, local mediums and shamans, and occasionally itinerant Daoist priests or Buddhist monks and nuns, dominated the ritual healing of individuals and the small-scale exorcistic rituals of evil forces, known among Daoists as *xiaofa* 小法 (minor methods).²⁴

Most missionaries, due to their precarious position in Chinese society, usually limited themselves to exorcisms of individuals in the *xiaofa* category and eschewed large public exorcisms. In the Catholic tradition, exorcism consisted mainly of the casting-out of demons from people’s bodies, although public processions, fasting, and penance—all common in Europe—could be seen as public exorcisms against epidemics or other catastrophes. In technical terms, personal exorcism consisted of an “adjuration” addressed to the demon in the name of God and Christ. Prayers, the sign of the cross, and the laying on of hands were the gestures used in common adjurations. Occasionally, blessed water, oil, or salt were used in personal exorcisms, as well as in blessing and consecration of sacred places. These powers received authority from evangelical passages describing how Jesus “cast out the spirits with his word, and he healed all that were sick.”²⁵

Any missionary in Fujian, Dominican or Jesuit, had to face the reality of a daily life rife with spiritual presences that needed to be tamed. The Jesuits deliberately eschewed direct interventions in exorcism, although they firmly believed in possessions and exorcism. Being too few

23. Quotation on Fuan’s customs in *Funing fuzhi* 1991, 399.

24. On large-scale rituals, see Lagerwey 1987, chap. 13; Katz 1995, 64–75; and Guo 2003, 21–39, and 2005, 183–94. For a succinct description of the *xiaofa* rituals in Daoism, see Dean, “Daoist Ritual Today,” in Kohn 2000, 675–77. For examples of use of daily objects in exorcism by local ritual specialists, see Haar 1998, 70–73.

25. Quotation from Gospel of Matthew 8:16; cf. Gospel of Mark 9:24.

to manage their large missions, they increasingly delegated daily responsibilities for instructions, prayer, devotional piety, charity, and even baptism, to local Christians organized in a complex system of confraternities for men, women, children, and catechists, especially in Jiangnan and Fujian. Minor forms of exorcism using prayers and sacred objects (demonifuges) were one of the powers they delegated to their flocks, as shown in the late Ming Fujianese Christian collection of supernatural stories, *A Mirror of Self-Cultivation* (*Lixiu yijian*, 1630s–1640s). When a demon infests the house of a Fuzhou literatus, he resorts to the ineffective services of a medium (*shiwu* 師巫). He then turns to a Christian neighbor, who puts him in touch with the resident Jesuit, probably Bento de Matos (1600–1652). De Matos responds to the desperate plea of the literatus for help: “There is no reason to worry. Let us first go to the Qiu 邱 family [where he was then proceeding] and after we have performed the Mass ritual, we naturally will take the [necessary] measures (*zi you fenfa* 自有分發).” The “necessary measures” consist in bringing holy images, holy water, and candles to the house and having Christians pray *in situ*. The priest, however, does not join them in this “ritual of expulsion” of the demon. The expression used to depict Matos’s action in “taking the necessary measures” (*fenfa* 分發) means more precisely “to send separately; to delegate” (a synonym for *fenpai* 分派, or *fenwei* 分委) and clarifies the central role of lay Christians in expelling the demon.²⁶

Dominicans were more attuned to requests by their religious “customers” for direct exorcistic interventions than most Jesuits were. Like the Jesuits before them, the Dominicans showed great disdain for their

26. For a description of the Jesuit system of confraternities, see Margiotti 1961 and 1962–63; and Brockey 2007, 328–401. Passage from *Lixiu yijian* translated in Zürcher 1985, 369; Chinese text in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Chinois* 6878-II, f. 3b. Ricci’s letters mention Christians using religious objects known as “sacramentals” given by the priests to perform exorcism of possessed individuals. Jesuits from Mediterranean countries had no concern for witches but believed in demonic possessions, exorcism, and ritual healing; see O’Malley 1993, 267–68. O’Malley concludes that “for the Jesuits the line between superstition and a supernatural gift for healing was sometimes thin” (*ibid.*, 268). On Ricci’s attitude toward Daoists, see D’Elia, ed., 1942–49, 1: 130; on examples of exorcism by Christians in Ricci’s lifetime, see Tacchi Venturi 1911–13, 2: 315, 319–20; and Zhang Qiong 1999, esp. 6–16. On sacramentals, see CE, “Sacramentals,” vol. 13; and Muir 1997, “Glossary.”

direct competitors, the local mediums whom they called *hechicheros* or *brujos*, that is, sorcerers or witches. In his lexicographical work, “Vocabolario de la lengua Mandarina” (ca. 1670), the talented Dominican linguist Varo displayed a rather neutral attitude toward the organized Buddhist establishment, but he reserved his excoriations for diviners and mediums (*gong* 公 and *wushi* 巫師 or *zuo [xie]shu de ren* 做[邪術]的人), whom we fit into the world of “popular religion.” Varo defined the *gong* as “diviners who communicate replies from the devil,” and *wushi* as “divining wizards who make a covenant with the devil.” In the early eighteenth century, González de San Pedro targeted also Daoist priests (*daoshi*). Since “the evil demons obey only the Lord of Heaven” (*xiemo zhi wei Tianzhu* 邪魔只畏天主), he argued, the occasional apparent success of Daoist exorcisms was therefore due to the weak disposition of those particular evil spirits, who had already decided to leave the possessed before the intervention of the Daoist master.²⁷

Several examples show the forceful and direct roles of the friars in taming evil spirits. In 1657 Victorio Riccio performed exorcisms while in Minnan. A Christian woman in Xiamen committed suicide after an altercation with her Christian husband. The ghost of the deceased soon haunted the house, provoking illness among the relatives living there. Riccio was called to action. He asked Christians to pray, and wearing the stole, he entered the house, read the exorcistic prayers, and blessed the house with holy water. Thereafter, the ghastly apparitions reportedly ceased, and everyone regained their health. The Chinese Dominican Gregorio Luo Wenzao, a native of Luojaxiang in Fuan, also performed exorcistic rituals, in direct competition with some *bonzes*. In the late 1650s, the family of a possessed woman in the village of Sangyang, possibly belonging to the Feng lineage, called Luo for help after some *bonzes* had failed to drive away the demon. Apparently, the demon itself had revealed, through the possessed woman, that it had no fear of the Buddhist monks but only of the Lord of Heaven. Luo baptized her and her daughter. The ceremony of baptism included a routine ritual of exorcism against demons, but Luo also gave her a cross and some holy water to ward off evil forces in the future. As a result, she was freed from

27. Quotation is from González de San Pedro 1706a, 25b. On the Dominican terminology for mediums, see Coblin 2006, 21–22; and Ibañez 1941–43, 556. Varo may have been absorbing the negative attitude of literati toward mediums, on which see Sutton 2000.

the demonic influence, and others in the village, convinced of the power of the Lord of Heaven, also converted.²⁸

Occasionally, exorcism took a public form. In 1676, Varo reported that a “parasitic demon” (*demonio arrimadico*) possessed a gentile woman in Fuan. The case became “known to the entire region [surrounding Fuan].” The possessed’s husband, a soldier, after many “earnest applications to the idols and their ministers,” brought his wife to the local temple of Guandi, the Chinese god of war, for more exorcistic rituals, but to no avail. The local military official, who was a Muslim (*moro*), decided to intervene; he marched his troops to the house of the soldier and engaged in a sort of exorcistic ritual, threatening to arrest the demon. But while he was in the house, the demon attacked him and made him flee in terror. Other “mandarins” intervened by sending written injunctions to the demon to abandon the house. The demon orally responded, presumably through the woman, that he wanted to stay longer and laughed at the written orders. Asked for its identity, it responded it was a *kiao kuey* (i.e., a *jiaogui* 狡鬼), an evil spirit, translated by Varo into Spanish as *duende*, a sort of goblin.²⁹ A Christian neighbor then proposed the efficacious services of the Catholic missionary. But since Varo was then in Muyang, local Christians started the exorcism by themselves, bringing a crucifix and holy water to the house. Their struggle with the demon proceeded for some days, and the friars had to intervene personally. They ordered the communities of Muyang, Fuan, and other villages to participate in the exorcistic ritual by fasting for three days and by reciting the communal litanies (*litanias de comunidad*) for eight days. Still, no results. Varo then vowed to celebrate fifteen masses in honor of St. Dominic in order to chase away the demon. The evil spirit was soon in flight. Besides baptizing the family of the possessed, Varo and del Valle accepted over 60 people in the faith in Fuan that year, and others were later “moved to become Christians by this case. Many of them had been our [former] enemies, and some [who were now converting] had been indifferent for many years to the friars’

28. GH, 1: 309, 330, based on RH. Besides these examples, see early cases of exorcism by Mindong friars in Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 489–90 (exorcism by Caballero, early 1630s); and Ocio 1895, 69 (ritual healing by Capillas, 1647).

29. Varo 1678, f. 355v; see *duende/jiaogui* in Coblin 2006, 219; according to Corominas 1976, 201–2, *duende* was originally the contraction of *duen de casa*, i.e., *dueño de casa*, the “lord of the house.” It indicated the spirit believed to inhabit a house.

preaching,” wrote Varo. Clearly, an effective exorcism proved a powerful incentive to shift allegiance to the Christian god and to abandon the other local gods.³⁰

From a number of cases recorded in Fuan in 1697–98, we can discern a pattern of Christian exorcistic procedures. Usually, demonic possessions of non-Christians like those described above ended after the possessed was baptized. If, however, the possessed was already a Christian, the use of amulets, blessings with holy water, and the performance of confession obtained the desired result. In 1729, for example, the house of a Christian in Luojiaxiang, Antonio Luo 羅, became infested with a demon, who attacked family members and destroyed their property. Later the demon started harassing other Christian families. The local priest, Joaquín Royo, interpreted the demonic attack as the devil’s attempt to stop the round of confessions Royo was performing in nearby Sangyang. He then gave the Luo family an *Agnus Dei* (a blessed wax amulet) and some other relics to use in the ritual of expulsion and instructed the Christians to imperiously shout an exorcistic formula against the demon. They did so, and after three days, the demon announced at night, through a young girl, that he was leaving the village. The priest arrived that night and completed the exorcism by blessing the infested houses, making an adjuration against the demon, and celebrating mass.³¹

Exorcism was also linked to physical recovery from illness, and the Dominicans, as befitting their priestly role, engaged in ritual healing. In the seventeenth century, for example, Raymundo del Valle became famous among Mindong Christians for his supernatural gifts of healing. In a 1686 manuscript hagiography of del Valle’s life, Francisco Varo referred to a number of healings his confrere performed using medical remedies as well as rosaries, holy images, and prayers. Varo observed that “although Fray Raymundo was not knowledgeable about medicine except for some simple manual remedies, he performed some exceptional cures of people who had no more hope. Christians attributed this more to the efficacy of his prayers than to the medicines he used.” He was even able to help a woman already advanced in years to conceive a

30. The case is described in Varo 1678, ff. 355r–56r.

31. For cases of baptismal exorcism in Fuan and Muyang, see GH, 1: 626–27. On the case of Antonio Luo, see letter of Royo, February 27, 1733, quoted in GH, 2: 258n9.

male offspring through the application of drugs and prayers. After he died, local Christians not only vied for his belongings as miraculous relics but also distributed clippings of his long beard among themselves to use for healing. Del Valle was also subject to frequent trances or mystical flights, and his spiritual gifts and his apparent candidness about them were such that local Christians, according to Varo, called him *hai-tong* 孩童 (in Varo's rendering *niño inocente*, "pure child"). Although the missionary interpreted the appellation as a recognition of Valle's simple heart, the term may have had another meaning among del Valle's Fujianese acquaintances: mediums in Fujian were known as *tâng-ki*, the Minnan pronunciation of *tongji* 童乩 (children of divination, divining youth). The abbreviated Minnan term for medium is "taŋ" 童, pronounced "tœŋ" in the Fuan dialect. It remains an open question whether the locals distinguished del Valle's trancelike mystical visions from the trances of Chinese mediums.³²

The friars' wonder-working and exorcisms had different impacts inside and outside the Christian community. Although Christians seemed pleased by the fame of the magical power attributed to their religious masters, a fame that put the Christian community on the local supernatural map, outsiders' opinions, depending on their social status and their official position, varied from hostility to fearful admiration. The literati's negative opinion of the exorcistic and healing activities of mediums, as well as the condemnations of sorcery in the imperial legal codes, especially in the Qing code, reflected negatively on the official image of the Catholic priests. Ultimately, the official anti-heresy perceptions and popular beliefs in black magic linked missionaries with the world of sorcery and spiritual power.³³

32. On del Valle's supernatural gifts, see Varo 1686, f. 342–43r–v; and GH, 1: 523. For similar cases in the Jesuit mission, see Gernet 1985, 91–92. On the use of *haitong* for del Valle, see Varo 1686, f. 335r; cf. GH, 1: 511n1. The term *taŋ* (contained in *tâng-ki*) is peculiar to the Min lexicon, and Norman 1991, 349, does not supply a character for it. Religious scholarship on Taiwan copiously refers to it. For example Jordan 1999, chap. 4, note 10, observes: "The Mandarin cognate would be *jítong* 乩童, but it is not clear that it is actually used, and I have preferred the Hokkien *tâng-ki*. . . . Groot . . . lists *tâng-ki* and *ki-tông* also for Xiamen city, adding *sintâng* 神童 and *tâng-chí* 童子 as well, although apparently this last is often used for lads in general as well as for gods' lads in particular."

33. Qing punishments for sorcery and other forbidden spiritual activities are listed in Article 162 of the Qing code, see Jones et al. 1994, 174; cf. also Kuhn 1990, 84–91. The Qianlong emperor himself firmly believed in the evil power of

Missionaries were routinely accused of producing drugs and performing incantations to lure converts or to seduce women. One of the most dramatic accusations, one that stuck to missionaries until the twentieth century, was their purported use of dead babies' body parts either to prolong life or produce drugs. The belief clearly stemmed from the missionary practice of baptizing dying infants. In Fujian, as early as the 1630s, anti-Christian foes accused the missionaries of using human bones to prepare holy oil and water. Fujianese immigrants to the Philippines also circulated rumors that contributed to the missionaries' fame in Fujian as practitioners of black magic. One such migrant, for example, attacked a Jesuit working along the Fujian-Jiangxi border in the early eighteenth century and asserted that in Manila he had witnessed how the blessed oil used in the baptismal ritual was in fact made from boiled intestines of the deceased. And in 1771, a Fuan magistrate apparently accused Christians of producing their holy oil from the ooze of decomposing cadavers ("sanguazas de cadaveres").³⁴

Popular and official imagination merged in the interrogations of arrested missionaries and Christians. During the 1746 anti-Christian campaign in Fuan, for example, Governor Zhou Xuejian reported to the Qianlong emperor that, according to popular opinion, missionaries, in order to keep their faithful under control, used secret drugs (*miyao* 密藥) for manufacturing the sacramental hosts:

[The missionaries] themselves manufacture in a secret room the wafers and the wine that they give people, and everybody says that the foreigners put some secret drug (*miyao*) in the wafers and the wine, so that once they are taken, [followers] cannot recant and reform their ways. When we arrested Bai Duo-lu [Bishop Sanz], we could not discriminate the nature of the powdered medicine, the medicinal paste, and the baby bones that we found in the under-

sorcery (Kuhn 1990, 92). The official reaction to such activities was not an attempt to rationalize sorcery in our modern sense but an effort to protect the ritual and supernatural prerogatives of the state.

34. See the anonymous list compiled by a Dominican, probably in Fujian, detailing expenses to "buy" with Spanish alms abandoned baby girls in 1778 (QL 43), "Lista de las niñas redimidas," post-1778? On the 1630s accusations in the region of Quanzhou, see PXJ as quoted in Gernet 1985, 121; on rumors spread by Fujianese immigrants, see *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (1717–74 edition), vol. 8, as quoted in Gernet 1985, 121n76. On the allegations by the Fuan magistrate in 1771, see GH, 2: 518. On the role of popular rumors in casting Westerners as witches and scapegoats during anti-Christian riots in nineteenth-century China, see Haar 2006, 154–95.

ground rooms, in the double walls, and on his body. When we interrogated [the missionaries], they rambled at will and we could not believe most of what they said.³⁵

It mattered little that the “powdered medicine” was cocoa, used at the time as a medicine by the Spaniards, or that the baby bones were in fact the relics of the “proto-martyr” Francisco Capillas (d. 1648): the authorities would not believe the priests’ explanations. In Fuan, many non-Christians clearly maintained that “the foreigners put some secret drug (*miyao*) in the wafer and the wine.” Thus the healing and magic roles of the missionaries imperceptibly blended into a single image of spiritual power that could be seen as good or evil according to one’s point of view.³⁶

Christians and missionaries alike shared some of the premises of their antagonists: they believed in spiritual presences, and they trusted amulets, relics, and prayers as powerful healing methods. Even non-Christians benefited from the “magic” powers of the friars. According to a late nineteenth-century missionary report, local lore reported that the non-Christian population of a small mountain village near Xiyin had hosted Bishop Sanz in 1746 while authorities were pursuing him. Before leaving the village, the prelate left with them a reliquary of the cross, a European book, and a small wooden altar (possibly a container for the host). For the following century, the objects were passed around in turns among the villagers, and the possessors were invariably blessed with prosperity. In the nineteenth century, attempts by Christians and missionaries to purchase the relics from the villagers apparently failed.³⁷

Local religious experts occasionally perceived missionaries as competitors, and people unfamiliar with the new doctrines and rituals sometimes labeled the foreign priests witches. In November 1676, for example, the Franciscans Augustin de San Pascual and Pedro de la Piñuela, who were then based in the territory of Ningde, south of Fuan, were accused of witchcraft in the village of Makeng 馬坑, where they had been evangelizing for over a month. The villagers were surprised by the apparition of a tiger in the vicinity, which attacked a dog in front of the

35. See QTS, vol. 1, doc. 58, 87. As a matter of fact, communion was never given under both species, bread and wine; only hosts were distributed.

36. Later a coroner confirmed the missionaries’ assertion that the “baby bones” were in fact the bones of an adult; see GM, 1: 243.

37. Vila 1894; cf. GM, 1: 455.

temple of a local god. They interrogated the god's medium ("vuen-kung" [wengong 問公], or "oraculo del diablo") who revealed to them that the foreigners' presence had displeased the god. Possibly, the tiger represented the threatening outsiders, and the dog embodied the local god and its community of worshippers. To make matters worse, de la Piñuela had been seen near the temple making strange signals, that is, the sign of the cross, and this allegedly had disturbed the god. The villagers finally expelled the missionaries and destroyed all their religious images and implements.³⁸

The examples offered so far show how Christianity, its priests, its symbols, and its sacred objects found a niche in the rather competitive supernatural local scene, in particular within the small-scale world of exorcistic "minor methods" and individual and familial piety. Unlike religious practitioners in the Buddhist, Daoist, and popular religious milieus, however, Catholic priests also exercised functions of control and direct education in the faith over and for their community. These functions can be seen as similar to those of county magistrates and village heads, who were charged with lecturing on the Sacred Edict to the populace and enforcing social and moral order.

Discipline

Catholic priests attempted to exercise control and discipline over Christian communities through various tactics, including indirect collection of information, pastoral journeys, pastoral letters, and the sacrament of penance ("confession of sins," *gaozui* 告罪, *gaojie* 告解, or *jie-zui* 解罪), arguably the most effective tool of moral control.

When Christians traveled to the main missionary residence to ask for religious services or to participate in rituals, priests had an excellent opportunity to gather information on the different communities. Priests could also exercise direct supervision over religious progress when they celebrated important feasts in faraway villages as guests of local families. Given the relatively compact size of the Fuan mission, priestly tours occurred more frequently than in the larger Jesuit communities, and the Dominicans' monitoring of Christians' activities was thus tightened.

38. SF, 3: 452; a fuller report of the incident authored by Piñuela (Sangyang, 1675) can be found in SF, 7.2: 1138–46. The village of Makeng is located 120 li north of Ningde; see *Ningde xianzhi* 1983, 158.

Through this personal monitoring, the friars occasionally became aware of unorthodox behaviors or laxity in fulfilling church obligations. In response they wrote “pastoral letters,” including circular letters and translations of important documents sent from Rome, to warn the faithful or to publicize new church policies. In a few cases, the superiors wrote letters in Latin and issued them only to fellow missionaries, but occasionally they composed documents in Chinese to be read to and circulated among lay Christians. For example, in the 1650s Juan Bautista de Morales and Francisco Varo translated into Chinese and circulated in Fuan an important 1645 pontifical decision prohibiting ancestral cults and other rituals. In the eighteenth century, various Dominican vicars apostolic issued letters in Chinese to their flock, legislating on “superstitions” and marriage rules. In one exceptional case, the Dominican Provincial Andrés Melendez (1722–1800) in Manila in the 1760s sent a Chinese-language circular to Fuan censoring a rebel group of Christians and Dominicans in Qidong and Dingtou. The document decried their resistance to central orders reassigning pastors to other churches. The China Dominicans customarily relied on canonical decisions for writings that related to doctrinal matters. The theologians of Manila’s Colegio de Santo Tomás provided the needed opinions, as they did in 1636, in response to a request on the newly discovered “Chinese Rites,” and again in 1676, when asked a series of questions on the validity of sacraments in special circumstances and on Chinese customs. In the eighteenth century, the Dominicans, who were charged with the position of vicars apostolic of Fujian, started addressing such questions directly to the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide* in Rome.³⁹

39. On the pontifical decree of 1645, see Filippucci 1700, 116. The Chinese text is in Morales 1650s?, ff. 177v–r [sic]; copy in Filippucci 1683a, f. 406r. Examples of Chinese circulars are those by Bishop Pallás against marriage with non-Christians and “superstitions” (1770s); see GH, 2: 545. A circular letter in Latin issued only to missionaries is the pastoral letter of Bishop Sanz composed in Muyang in 1745, enforcing the anti-Rites bull *Ex quo singulari* by Pope Benedict XIV (1742); see GH, 2: 307–11. The letter of Melendez is entitled “Fuan zhong jiaoyou shi” 福安眾教友示, n.d., APSR, *China*, vol. 9, doc. 12 (c), ff. 32–33. On the “schism of Fuan,” see GH, 2: 502–3. On the 1636 questions, see Margiotti 1978; for the 1676 example, see the series of 28 questions on cases of conscience, mainly regarding concubinage, marriage, and ancestor worship, presented by Arcadio del Rosario to the theologian of the Colegio de Santo Tomás, Juan de Paz; copies in AMEP, vol. 428, ff. 855–85; Biblioteca Casanatense, v. 1074, ff. 222r–45r; on questions from vicars apostolic to Rome, see Ly 1959, *passim*.

Undoubtedly, however, the sacrament of penance (or “confession”) was the most direct instrument available to missionaries for controlling religious and social behavior. Many scholars have examined confession as a technology of domination and have shown how the church and the state used it as a central mechanism in the disciplining of Catholic societies in Europe and the colonies.⁴⁰ The sacrament of penance conferred on the priest a position of authority, described in a candid exchange between the Jesuit Rui de Figuereido and Joseph Zhu Yupu 朱毓朴, a Ming imperial relative in the Kaifeng region in the 1630s. When asked why there was the need of an intermediary to obtain God’s forgiveness, the missionary told Zhu that one reason for God’s bestowal of the power of confession was to endow the priest with authority and standing vis-à-vis the community:

[Confession] protects the missionary (*baohu chuanjiao de shenfu* 保護傳教的神父). He thus will be respected and loved by people, they will approach him, listen to his religious instruction, and follow his teachings. . . . [He will be respected and loved because] he enjoys such great powers, and because all those who have sinned must ask him to confess; otherwise God does not give absolution. There is no form of respect higher than this in the world. The sovereign in the court and the officials have power and influence over people, but they absolutely cannot rival [the power of the priest]. How could he not be respected and loved by the people? . . . [People will approach and follow him] because, when they have sins, a priest must give them absolution; otherwise one cannot hope to avoid the pains of hell and enjoy heaven. These extremely important matters of the faithful are entrusted by God to the priest, how could people not approach and follow him?⁴¹

40. Recent summaries of the extensive historiography on Catholic confession can be found, e.g., in Myers 1996; De Boer 2001; and Rusconi 2002. For an in-depth treatment of confession in the Catholic China mission, see Menegon 2006a, as well as other essays in Standaert and Dudink 2006.

41. CCT ARSI, 3: 317–18. Zhu’s extensive text is entitled *Shengjiao yuanliu* 聖教源流 (The source and spreading of the Holy Teachings; preface dated 1635). The author was one of the many members of the Ming imperial family scattered in the empire. He purposely composed the book in vernacular Chinese and in a popular style, probably taking down notes from his oral exchanges with the missionary Rui de Figuereido (1594–1642) over a period of nine months between November–December 1635 and August 1636 (see Albert Chan 2002, 186–89). The fourth *juan* in book four, dedicated to rituals (*liyi* 禮儀, i.e., the seven sacraments) is about confession (reprinted in CCT ARSI, 3: 315–45). The chapter quite possibly reflects

After Christians accepted the idea of sin and retribution as part of the Catholic tradition, they were also bound to accept the need of a priest for confession. Conversely, the priest used confession to exert his authority in the community. But priests had to be vigilant in defending their prerogatives as ritual experts: occasional incidents that threatened the supremacy of the priest reveal how Chinese religious leaders in local communities coveted the prestige of their position as demonstrated in their capacity as *confessors*. The result was the creation of dissident groups run by visionaries who interpreted rituals and doctrine in creative ways. This phenomenon was exacerbated by the lack of priests during difficult times of suppression of Christianity in the eighteenth century. These alternative religious leaders, usually men, were sometimes converts with a good knowledge of Christian practices and doctrine, or, more rarely, local mediums. Or they were former sectarians who had converted to Christianity and who simply decided to create a new cult combining their previous teachings with Christian ones. These individuals, as often happened among Chinese lay devotional groups, tried to use the new religious symbols and rituals to cement their authority over the local community of believers. Auricular confession, so clearly the preserve of ordained priests and previously an unknown practice among native sectarian groups, thus became a bone of contention. “Heretical leaders” acted as priests and administered confession, or similar practices, in an attempt to co-opt some of the authority enjoyed by the ordained Catholic priest in the community. This phenomenon of improvised confession, not unknown in the early days of the mission, became more common after the mid-eighteenth century, when Chinese priests began to be ordained in some numbers, and Chinese “impostors” gained credibility. For example, in the early 1750s, a period of heightened government surveillance against Christians in Fujian following the arrest and execution of all foreign missionaries, a Fuan man impersonated the only Dominican remaining in the province, the native Juan Feng Shiming, and went about exorcising demons, celebrating mass, and confessing the faithful. Despite these incidents, however, it appears that the monopoly of priests over auricular confession remained mostly unbroken. Exclusive priestly authority in the realm of sacraments was certainly enhanced by their unique connection with a distant hierarchy

both the typical oral instruction on confession by a Jesuit missionary and the way a convert understood the priest’s explanations.

of religious power far to the west, their knowledge of rituals, and their use of a mysterious ritual language during the celebrations, Latin.⁴²

If confession led to a certain priestly control over Christians, it also was an effective spiritual and psychological balm for individuals facing sinfulness, illness, and death. At the beginning of the China mission, the Jesuits expended considerable efforts in introducing the ideas of sin, self-examination, and salvation in the afterlife. This emphasis reflected the Jesuit spiritual style and concern for moral improvement; it also fit well with the Confucian discourse of self-cultivation. The concept of salvation, moreover, was well known in Chinese Buddhist discourse, and salvation's link with the sacraments of baptism and confession was easy to introduce to Fujianese literati through discussions on the brevity of life and mortality so dear to European audiences. Starting in the 1630s, Aleni produced prescriptive texts that explained the ritual elements of confession within the context of the Jesuit spiritual emphasis on self-cultivation. The Jesuits paid great attention to examination of sins and contrition and to the disinterested love for God as the motivation for repentance, as contemporary writings by Christian literati also confirm. Yet, the search for perfection was never separated from fear and consciousness of the possibility of sinning. The daily experience of confession was powerfully connected with the Christians' concern for salvation in the afterlife.

Li Sixuan 李嗣玄 (fl. 1626–45), one of Aleni's Fujianese literati followers and a good friend of the Fuan converts Guo Bangyong and Miao Shixiang, expressed his fears about sin rather clearly. When “confession and absolution had fallen into abeyance,” due to the disruptions caused by the Ming-Qing wars in his native Jianning (Fujian) around 1646, Li was overwhelmed with horror about his sins, but also felt consoled by the memory of the spiritual guidance and the sacramental absolution that Aleni had given him the previous year: “Sin and crime were piled up like mountains—thinking of that made one perspire [with fear]. But just because I was so afraid [of the consequences] of my own sins, I was even more grateful for the favors received from my teacher Aleni, and I could not help weeping, tears running down and across [my face].” In

42. For examples of these phenomena in Chinese Catholic communities, see Tiedemann 1996; Laamann 2006; Hsia 2006, 733; and Menegon 2006a. On the Chinese priestly impersonator, see GH, 2: 462n40, quoting a letter of Juan Feng Shiming, dated November 22, 1751.

those perilous times, death was a daily matter, and the accumulation of sins created enormous anxiety. In Fuan, the prominent Christian leader Miao Shixiang was so concerned about dying in sin that he found no other way to make his last confession, before being killed at the hand of Qing troops during the 1648 siege of Fuan, than to write a last letter to his Dominican confessor, Juan García. There he listed his sins and asked for absolution, leaving to the church an annuity of “three hundred measures of rice from his property . . . for the good of his own soul,” that is, for masses of suffrage in his remembrance.⁴³

Confession was thus not only a form of imposed discipline but also a practice Christians consciously chose to ease their psychological anxieties. The two interlocking dimensions of priestly discipline and psychological relief are poignantly illustrated in letters written in 1695 by the leader of the Zhangzhou Christian community, Yan Mo 嚴謨 (?–post 1718). At that time this Jesuit community, which had existed since the late Ming, had been reassigned to the care of the Dominicans. In previous years, Yan Mo had debated the topic of ritual, supporting Jesuit acceptance of Chinese ceremonies to the ancestors and Confucius with philological arguments based on the Classics. For that reason, the

43. Salvation remained a central concern for Christians, no matter what their social status was. The Jesuit Laimbekhoven thought that even the most ignorant Christians in the eighteenth century retained at least the idea of salvation and “believed that if they received the Holy Oils on their deathbed, they would go straight to heaven”; see Krahll 1964, 141. Translation of the passage in Giulio Aleni’s biography by Li Sixuan is found in Zürcher 1997b, 115 (see Chinese text in CCT ARSI, 12: 256). The main task of Aleni’s tours at this time of civil war was precisely to administer confession; see Zürcher 1997b, 113; and CCT ARSI, 12: 255. The episode of Miao Shixiang’s confession in writing is recorded in Riccio 1667, f. 234v. In a culture so centered on writing, where communication with superiors and with the gods was mostly written, and where personal “ledgers of merit and demerit” were so popular, Chinese audiences asked missionaries whether it was possible to confess in writing. The Jesuits had initially tolerated written confessions in the Japan mission but had finally forbidden them under pain of excommunication in 1605; see Lopez-Gay 1970, 121–22. Similarly, Aleni’s *Correct Rules to Wash Away Sins* (*Dizui zhenggui* 滌罪正規, Fuzhou, 1627) also explained that such confessions were not allowed (3.10b–11b), as did the *Manual for Priests* (*Siduo dianyao* 司鐸典要, Beijing, 1676), a rendition by Ludovico Buglio of the *De instructione sacerdotum*, 1599, by Francisco de Toledo, S.J., (1534–96), 1.37b, copy preserved in the Royal Library in Brussels, Belgium, codex 21.055 (*juan* 1). For further details on confession, see Menegon 2006a.

Dominicans had ostracized him and most of the local Christians and denied them the sacraments. When his nephew Michael was seriously ill, Yan Mo asked the Dominican priest Magino Ventallol to hear the young man's deathbed confession. The friar agreed on the condition that Yan Mo recant in writing his previous theological treatises. Yan lamented the situation in letters to the Jesuits, asking them to travel to Zhangzhou to perform the needed sacraments. In the letters, Yan compared the hoped-for visit from the Jesuits to celebrate the sacraments to a case of "starved people finding food or the dead being revived" (*ru ji de shi, ru si de huo* 如饑得食, 如死得活). He also wrote that being denied the sacraments, especially confession, was like being "under hot water and burning fire" (*ci shi ru zai tanghuo zhi zhong ye* 茲事如在湯火之中也). These impassioned pleas show that the sacraments, and confession in particular, were indeed desired spiritual solaces for converts, especially when illness portended death and possible damnation without a clear conscience.⁴⁴

The different roles and identities of the priest and of his ritual interactions with Christians and non-Christians alike paint Christianity as a religious system centrally controlled by the clergy, confrontational, and potentially exclusionary. It would be inaccurate, however, to see the priests as the only directive element in a community's life. Although non-Christians and some Christians may have perceived and used Christianity and its priests as a utilitarian repertoire of religious symbols and objects in order to exorcise demons or purify their individual sins and so ascend to heaven, the internal ritual life of the Fuan communities displays a remarkable *communal* commitment over time. The Chinese Christians absorbed a basic stock of doctrinal and spiritual tenets, nurtured by local families and religious lay leaders and organizations through sacramental and devotional practices. Such attitudes and activities provided religious coherence and communal identity, and it is to them that we now turn.

44. See Standaert 1995; for more on these debates, see Chapter 7 as well. Yan Mo's letters are addressed to José Monteiro (ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* I, 38/42, 41/2a), and to Simão Rodrigues (ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* I, 38/42, 41/4). A summary of the letters can be found in Albert Chan 1996, 436.

Sacramental and Devotional Life of the Christians

As noted above, the ritual practitioner, the priest, might delegate certain practices to the faithful, who often took the task of expelling demons and disease into their own hands. In sacramental practices, but especially in devotional activities, lay Christians in Fuan increasingly took center stage in acting out their faith. Celebrations of the sacraments provided occasions for Christians to become familiar with communal and individual prayer, examination of conscience, and meditation over images and texts, activities that they could then continue to perform without a priest under coordination by the local lay leaders. These practices constituted the most enduring feature of community life and sustained the family-centered as well as the communal religious life of the Christians.

Sacraments performed by priests, such as confession or the eucharist, were obligations that most Christians fulfilled at least once a year. Although regular attendance at mass and abstention from work on Sundays could rarely occur in larger mission territories, the smaller radius of the Dominican mission in Fuan allowed for better and more frequent observance. In the 1640s, Aduarte, the first historian of the mission, reported that Fuan Chinese Christians met their obligations and attended mass often, in sharp contrast to non-Christians, who “go to worship very rarely to their temples and [have] almost no obligation.” When the Dominicans first arrived in Mindong in the 1630s, they were surprised by the relatively carefree attitude of Jesuit converts toward the feast day precept and, together with the Franciscans, accused the Jesuits of neglecting enforcement of the church’s obligations. They soon publicized the various rules for fasting, abstinence, and attendance at mass, based on the liturgical calendar, and proceeded to denounce the Jesuits’ laxity in Manila, Macau, and Rome. Some converts were indeed very assiduous in their religious duties, as the seventeen-*sui* *beata* Lucia Guo Xiaoshi 郭曉使 attested in 1747: “We listen [to our priests] when they preach, and on a *daily basis* we pray and confess our sins, so that after death we will ascend to heaven and reach the perfection of the Dao 道.” It is doubtful, however, that, except for a limited circle of devouts, the majority of Christians could attend sacraments and rituals on a daily basis.⁴⁵

45. On attendance at the sacraments and the liturgical calendar, see Menegon 2005a. Quotation from Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 486; see also Bürkler 1942, 4. Jesuit

The most important communal ritual was the mass, which imprinted prayers and ritual motions onto the minds and bodies of Christians, offering them a convenient compass to navigate lay personal and family piety. Ordinary masses on Sundays were simple affairs. In Europe, the norm was the low mass, celebrated by a single priest and server, without music, and there is no reason to believe that in China the situation differed. In spite of instructions ordering priests to offer sermons, homilies were rare. Rather, the priest stood at the altar, with his back to the congregation, whispering the canon of the mass in Latin in an almost inaudible murmur and only moving his body from one side of the altar to the other, or elevating the chalice. Communion at the chancel was not given after elevation of the host, as it is today, but offered at some other time during the mass or afterward. The occasional sermon also preceded or followed the mass. Connection between the ritual action and the congregation was intermittent at best. The laity had other ways of involving themselves with the ritual, such as meditational prayers written in prayer books and the medieval tradition of *expositio missae*, a special allegorical reading of the main mass sequences and of the movements of the priest.⁴⁶

In their textual explanation of the mass, the China Jesuits introduced the *expositio missae* and its visual approach to the eucharist, presented as an epiphany of Christ as the priest elevated the host. As a popular 1628 Chinese-language prayer book put it, “Seeing the Mass

missionaries had also noted the lack of weekly communal rites since the very beginning of their enterprise. In the 1601 “*Littera Annua*,” the Jesuit Carvalho wrote that “it is very unusual for any of the sects of China to meet very frequently” (quoted in Bürkler 1942, 3). Later on, however, missionary reports from Shanxi refer to the regular meetings of native lay devotional groups. Such groups all over China had periodical meetings, usually twice a month, with an intense ritual activity; see Groot 1903, 220–21; Overmyer 1976, 187–88; and Naquin 1985. On the precepts of the Catholic church (sanctification of feasts; fasting at certain times; annual confession and Easter communion), see Dudink 2007a. Although the Jesuits had proclaimed the precept of respecting feast days in their early catechisms (Ruggeri; Ricci; Da Rocha), regular attendance at masses was not strictly enforced. The Jesuit Ignacio Lobo (1603–?) in Fujian admitted that his order was less exacting with new converts to gradually accustom them to confession and attending Mass only at the major feasts; see Bürkler 1942, 10. The confession of Lucia Guo Xiaoshi is in AMEP, vol. 436, f. 137 (YQTW, doc. 34, 139–40).

46. For a brief description of the mass liturgy in early modern Europe, see White 1995, 18.

(*kan misa* 看彌撒) is seeing how Our Lord Jesus suffered the passion, died nailed on a cross, and gave his blood, offering it to the Lord of Heaven, the Great Father, to ransom the sins of all people.” The priest’s approach to the altar from the sacristy and the sequence of actions he performed in preparing the altar and the reading lectern were interpreted as God’s preparations for the coming of Jesus in the history of salvation, with the “descent” of the priest from the altar to the lectern as an allegory of Christ’s incarnation. Although later Chinese prayer books, including those compiled by Franciscans and Dominicans, continued to present the *expositio* well into the eighteenth century, this system of mental imagery turned out to be too complex for commoners and for the celebration of regular low masses. It probably was practiced only by the most devout and literate circle of Christians.⁴⁷

A popular pocket-size prayer book compiled in 1668 by Francisco Varo in Fuan for the use of the laity, entitled *An Essential Manual of the General Texts* (*Zongdu cuoyao* 總贖撮要), offers a glimpse of the simpler lay devotional life in the Christian communities of Mindong. Varo’s preface illustrates how to use the prayer book:

The Jesuits have already translated and diffused for a long time a number of prayer books of the Holy Teachings. In order to avoid the complexity of the original texts in the old editions, this essential manual has been simplified and supplemented with one or two modifications. It is a small-format book, for the convenience of the faithful in their devotions (*jiaoyou yonggong* 教友用功) and for the ease in taking it out and in [of the sleeve] and in holding it. The book is divided in two volumes. The first volume contains a series of daily prayers. [The second volume contains] the *Rules for Attending Mass* followed by the *Short Rules for Confession*, the *Principles for Receiving Communion*, and matters of urgent salvation (*jijiu shi* 急救事 [baptismal formulas that lay people could use to baptize others during emergencies in absence of a priest]). Thus, this [book] is necessary in order to serve the Lord both *in one’s private room or when one goes out to church* [italics added], and it concisely gathers here what is needed to cultivate the self (*xiu ji* 修己) and love others.⁴⁸

47. For a discussion of the *expositio missae* in the China mission, see Dudink 2007b; cf. also Brunner 1964, 125–27.

48. Varo 1668, preface. The incomplete copy (*juan* 1) of Varo’s *Zongdu cuoyao* I consulted is preserved in the Biblioteca Corsiniana, Accademia dei Lincei, Rome, 44.A.1; the preface is dated 1668, beginning of summer, Feast of the Holy Trinity (first Sunday after Pentecost, i.e., May 27, 1668). A complete copy (not seen) is preserved in St. Petersburg, and described in Rossiiskaia natsional’naia biblioteka

This excerpt from the preface clarifies the uses of the prayer book: private devotion and public worship. In public, it was used to guide Chinese Christians in the otherwise impenetrable ritual of the mass, whose canon was secret and could not be translated.⁴⁹

In his preface Varo mentioned a series of short works he included in the second volume of the prayer book. The works were practical guides for communal sacramental rituals, such as a method to attend mass entitled *Yu Misa lijie* 與彌撒禮節 (Rules for attending Mass), either an adaptation of the *Misa lijie* (Mass rites) attributed to Longobardo, or to the simpler *Yu Misa li* (Ritual to attend mass) of Aleni; a method to confess, the *Dizui guilüe* 滌罪規略 (Short rules for confession), which is an adaptation of Aleni's *Dizui zhengui lüe* 滌罪正規略 (an abridged version of his *Dizui zhengui* [Rules for confession]), and another short treatise by Aleni, the *Ling Shengti yaoli* 領聖體要理 (Principles for receiving communion).⁵⁰ The aim of these practical tracts was to direct the faithful, step by step, in how to follow the various rituals and penetrate their meanings. The *Misa lijie*, which probably inspired Varo, for example, described the motions of the priest and indicated what prayers the faithful should utter and when. The text explained the meaning of the ritual acts as an allegory of salvation history in the tradition of the *expositio missae*. Each action of the priest during mass corresponded to

1993, 120, no. 201. Navarrete's *Controversias*, as quoted in GH, 5: 37, mentions the popularity of this prayer book: "Fr. Francisco Varo during the persecution [1664–71] printed a book with prayers, exercises, contemplation, and the way to confess. The Christians desired that book very much."

49. White 1995, 37: "Translations of the mass were forbidden under pain of excommunication. It was regarded as a daring act even to recite the canon in Latin so as to be audible by the congregation. The general rubrics labeled the canon *secreto*." In China, special exemptions applied. The translation of the essential parts of the canon of the mass *Misa jingdian* 彌撒經典 (*Missale Romanum*) in Chinese was accomplished in 1670 by Ludovico Buglio, and since 1629, Aleni's digest of the mass ritual (*Misa ji yi* 彌撒祭義) had been available to Christians in Fujian and elsewhere. Nevertheless, all efforts to have a mass in Chinese were defeated by the eighteenth century, and the Dominicans never used the Chinese translations, but continued to use the Latin canon; cf. Bontinck 1962, 155–57, 461, quoting the Dominican Navarrete's opinion (ca. 1675) that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to translate [the liturgical books into Chinese] well."

50. Varo's preface supplies slightly modified titles, which leave room for ambiguity. These title modifications could also indicate that Varo further simplified the Jesuit texts. For a list of Aleni's texts, see Menegon 1994b, 204, 206; details on Varo's use of them in Menegon 2006a.

episodes in the life of Christ and was accompanied by simple prayers. This method had the advantage of keeping the mind of the faithful focused on the ritual action while inspiring prayerful meditation and inculcating catechetical teachings.⁵¹

In spite of the relative passivity of churchgoers vis-à-vis the celebrant, however, some climactic moments of the mass focused the attention of attendees, making them more emotionally involved. The theatrical organization of the ritual space, promoted in Catholic Europe starting around the sixteenth century, defined by a large congregational hall facing an altar, to where all spatial lines converged, encouraged people to fix their eyes on the important moments of the celebration, especially the priest's elevation of the host. In Mindong, churches combined European liturgical concerns with Chinese architectural features. Church buildings were usually Chinese in style and made of wood and brick. An example was the large church under construction in 1723, inside the walled town of Fuan, built with the generous donations of the affluent Chen family. These buildings usually consisted of one large chamber, and functionally reproduced the theatrical stage/public structure of early modern Western churches, on a much smaller scale while blending these with local architecture.⁵²

Christians memorized the repertoire of prayers connected to the sacraments as a template for communal worship. Such prayers, however, also encouraged recitational and meditational habits that could be cultivated individually, in families, and in lay congregations, without a priestly presence, as the mention of individual piety "in one's private room" in Varo's text suggests. In Fuan, the most common daily devotional practice in lay religious life was recitation of the rosary, particularly beloved in the Dominican tradition. Varo's 1668 pocket-size prayer book contains instructions for reciting the rosary and describes the beginning of the tradition more than four centuries earlier in Toulouse, France. The Holy Mother (*sheng mu* 聖母) had appeared in person to St. Dominic, founder of the Dominican Order and had ordered him to teach people to pray over the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, that is, to recite the Hail Mary and other prayers after meditation on

51. These allegorical "mass rules" (*Ordo Missae*) were employed in different formats by Jesuits and missionaries of other orders in their prayer books; see Brunner 1959 and 1964, 91–92; Dudink 2007b.

52. On the Fuan church, see GH, 2: 159n12, quoting a 1733 report from Eusebio Scotot.

key evangelical episodes. Now, that devotion had reached China, and since it was not a human but a divine institution, no Christian should neglect it, argued Varo.⁵³

Indeed, the recitation of the rosary was one of the most enduring devotions of the Dominican mission. According to the standard practice, a total of 150 Hail Marys were divided in three cycles of 50 (*san dai* 三台), to be recited, like other devotions, according to a specific weekly schedule organized around feast days. Thus, for any Christian, the calculation of cultic time, accomplished by means of printed or manuscript Chinese-language liturgical calendars, was of paramount importance in ordering ritual life, especially in the priest's absence. This new structure of time, organized in a unit of seven days, however familiar in the West, was unknown in late imperial China. The most important day in Christian calendars was Sunday, the "Day of the Lord" (*zhuri* 主日), and the remaining days were numbered in order, revolving around that most important day. The five Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary (meditations on the life of Christ), for example, were to be recited on "the first and fourth day after the day of the Lord"; the five Sorrowful Mysteries on the Passion on "the second and fifth day"; and the five Glorious Mysteries on the Resurrection on the "third and sixth day." Finally on the Day of the Lord, the entire rosary was to be recited. The faithful were required to keep a watchful count of the number of prayers they were reciting, as well as of the days in which each set had to be recited. Some devout Christian might have become obsessed with this prayer: the 1737 *Acta* of the Manila Dominican chapter, for example, commemorated the death of a Fuan tertiary, Thadeo Chen, so devoted to the rosary ("very addicted"; *addictissimus*) that he repeated the cycle of Hail Mary eight times a day, and would wake up at midnight to pray it, as the Third Order rules prescribed. Certainly, the rosary practice most consistently governed the cadence of Christian life in Mindong.⁵⁴

The devotion of the rosary, particularly popular among women, was practiced alone, in choirs in the church, or with one's family at night. A description by the nineteenth-century Italian Dominican, Tommaso

53. "Meigui shiwu duan yin" (Introduction to the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary), in Varo 1668, 46a–47b.

54. For an example of a Catholic liturgical calendar, see Couplet 1712, f. 1a. For a fuller treatment of liturgical time in the Fujian mission, see Menegon 2005a. On Thadeo Chen, see *Acta* 1877, 241.

Gentili, of rosary recitation in Mindong is worthy of quotation in its entirety. It shows how piety was nurtured in the family, a place where Christian traditions could be preserved even in difficult times by prayer leaders and pious Christians, without priestly aid:

When a certain signal is given, or when someone cries *nem-keing* (*nian jing* 念經), that is, "Let us pray," all members of the family rush to the room or oratory, and, after kneeling, each silently does the double sign of the cross, that is they first with their thumb do the three little crosses on their forehead, lips, and chest, reciting in Chinese the "Per signum crucis, de inimicis nostris libera nos Domine" [By the sign of the Cross, free us from our enemies, O Lord]. Then follows the great sign of the cross: "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." They then prostrate themselves with their face to the ground, and they silently recite the *Confiteor* and *Misereatur*. The *keing-tau* (*jingtou* 經頭 [the main reciter]) starts the chanting of the *Angelus Domini*, and at these first words, everybody kneeling, they respond to the *Angelus*. After the person who intones the Rosary has recited the *Oremus*, they sing the sequence *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, translated in Chinese with its particular prayer. . . . Usually the litanies of the Most Holy Virgin precede the recitation of the Holy Rosary; the litanies of the saints are instead used on the major feast days. After the litanies, there follows an offering to the Lord of that recitation of the Rosary, prayers for the exaltation of the Holy Catholic Church, for the preservation of the pope, for the peace among Christian princes, for the extirpation of heresies, for the conversion of sinners, of the pagan peoples and especially of China. After such a long preparation, the *jingtou* intones the mysteries of the Rosary, both the simple ones, or during feast days, the long ones, to which are attached devout considerations. At the end of the mysteries the *Salve Regina* is recited with the *Oremus*, and the session is concluded by the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, the Act of Contrition, and a *Requiescant in pace* for the souls in purgatory. Usually every family in the evening recites the Psalter of Mary, and if in a family there is not enough people to form a choir, then they meet during the day or at night with their neighbors.⁵⁵

55. Quotation from Gentili 1887–88, 3: 160–61. Cocchi had introduced this recitational pattern to Fuan Christians in 1633; see Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 370; cf. San Roman 2000, 12; and Gentili 1887–88, 3: 160. Elderly churchgoers still chant the same way today during mass, as I witnessed in Beijing in the early 1990s. The double sign of the cross—tracing three small crosses on the forehead, mouth, and chest, then a large cross, and finally joining the hands in front of the chest—opened all prayers and was a formula employed in Spain, Portugal, and in their colonies, and used in China until the 1950s.

Although it could be used for personal prayer, the recitation of the rosary as practiced in Fuan became the most “communal” lay devotional practice and encouraged the daily gathering of the family or neighbors.

An important mnemonic device used in the recitation was the 150-bead string called in Chinese *zhuchuan* 珠串. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Fuan Christians liked “to visibly wear the rosary on their neck as a sign of being Christians; . . . in time of persecution they still wear it, but then it is not visible. . . . The best ornament for Christian women is a rosary on their neck, and they try to get luxury ones, with golden or silver ornaments. . . . They never touch the rosary without first washing their hands.” The rosary was in fact one of the most popular devotional objects that missionaries imported for their converts: in a shipment sent from Macau to Fuan in 1678, along with statues, candles, and reliquaries, we find “a large quantity of rosaries.” In 1716 Pedro Sanz complained that he could not find rosaries locally and that he needed more than the three dozen he had recently received from Guangzhou. He suggested to his superiors that they have them cheaply made in the Philippine region of Pangasinán. Years later, in 1738, he asked again for imported rosaries, so-called “Rosarios de Goa,” made with the wood of acacia or cachumbo, a tropical hard cocoa-wood, as well as other “devotional objects for the Chinese [Christians], such as prints, rosaries, medals.”⁵⁶

But the rosary, first mentioned in Chinese scriptures and depicted in stone reliefs in the fourth century AD, was not a novelty in China. The rosary was in fact an important devotional object in Buddhism, used mainly to count the recitations of the name of the Buddha Amitābha. Initially handled only by monks and nuns, it later became an object for use by the laity but remained linked to private devotion. In the Qing period, court officials commonly wore it on their robes as an ornament. Similar in physical shape, the Christian rosary was also used in a style of recitation close to that of lay Buddhist groups, and missionaries themselves were aware of these similarities. The 1627 Jesuit “*Littera Annu*”

56. Gentili’s comments on the rosary are found in Gentili 1887–88, 3: 162. Wearing rosaries on the neck was also a custom of the Dominican friars of the Province of the Most Holy Rosary of the Philippines; see P. Fernández 1958, 54. On shipments of rosaries, see Varo 1678, f. 362v; GM, 2: 16, letter of Sanz to Provincial Vila, Luoyuan, December 9, 1716; GM, 2: 33, letter of Sanz to Propaganda Fide Procurator Arcangelo Miralta, Muyang, July 4, 1738; and GM, 2: 41, letter of Sanz to Miralta, Muyang, November 3, 1738.

from Shanxi, for example, clearly draws the parallel, referring to indigenous groups, “that on certain days of the month bring men together with men, and women with women to pray their doctrines and prayers . . . [sung] with such harmony and order that it appears like the choirs of our religious from Europe.” Gentili also observed how Fuan Christians used these Chinese modes of recitation:

One should be aware that the Chinese, when it is time to recite together, cannot do it in a low voice but sing in the way a choir of monks chants in semitone, since their language is naturally musical. Thus, since they chant the Rosary in a poised way, usually a third of the Rosary lasts two or three times longer than among us. When at night . . . I had to go out and passed through places inhabited by Christians, [I would hear] that sweet harmony . . . and even in the darkness of night it was easy to distinguish the Christian families among hundreds of pagan families.

The length of the recitation was due both to this Chinese-style “chanting in semitone” and to the way the rosary had been structured since the seventeenth century in Fuan, adapting to the situation of the Christian family:

Our first missionaries, not without reason, taught them a method [to recite the rosary] rather different from ours . . . We can say that they start from where we end. I think that it is not far from the truth to say that this difference came from recognizing the circumstances of the Christian family in China. Indeed, it often happens that when they start intoning the rosary, not all have their hands free, either because they are busy with the children or some other matter they cannot drop at once. For that reason, those prudent missionaries had them first precede the [Mysteries] by other prayers, so that all would be present at the beginning of the recitation of the Mysteries, that are the essence of the Rosary.

Another reason to have the rosary preceded by so many prayers, some of them usually recited at mass or confession (e.g., the *Confiteor* or the Act of Contrition) as well, must have been pedagogical: these repeated recitations inculcated the formulas in the younger members of the family for personal devotion and for public worship.⁵⁷

57. Quotation from Gentili 1887–88, 3: 160. The Buddhist rosary was called *shuzhu* 數珠 (counting beads), *xiangzhu* 香珠 (fragrant beads), *nianzhu* 念珠 (recitation beads), and *chizhu* 持珠 (beads for keeping [recitations]), terms that missionaries occasionally used. On the Buddhist rosary, see Kieschnick 2003, 124–38. On Jesuit accounts about meetings of Chinese lay devotional groups in Shanxi, see “*Littera Annu*” of 1627, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, *Jesuítas na Ásia* 49-V-6, f. 481v,

Being a confluence of Western and Chinese practices, the rosary epitomized the hybrid nature of Christian devotion in China. As in the case of exorcism, elements existing in the local religious landscape prior to the arrival of Christianity made the new modes of religious practice acceptable to Mindong converts. In the 1630s, lay Buddhist groups, such as the Nonaction movement, had started spreading in southern Zhejiang and northern Fujian, and their recitational and meditational practices, derived from orthodox monastic Buddhism, were likely familiar to many in the region.

If devotional practices, however, had remained merely personal or simply functioned as an unstructured family tradition, it is unlikely, without an effective lay leadership, that Christianity could have taken root so effectively in Mindong, weathering not only the initial hostility of some lineages but also the Qing state's open attacks in the eighteenth century. The Christian community survived because a number of organizations, foremost among them the Third Order, offered to the most committed Christians a venue both to display their religious fervor and to take on leadership responsibilities, even in the larger social arena. The space for religious and social expression created by these organizations varied, as did different individuals' commitment to Christianity. Nevertheless, these groups were crucial in easing the entrenchment of Christianity in Mindong.

Communal Organizations of the Christian Community

Missionaries in China could not effectively proselytize or administer the mission without help from local Christians. Women were confined mainly to the domestic sphere and to contacts with other women in the villages, but men had mobility and interacted in the social arena more. They frequently served as the main assistants to priests. Christian sources describe a logistical network as well as a series of devotional groups, sometimes overlapping in function. The logistical organization was made up of men employed full or part-time as domestics, sacristans

"Residencia de Xen si," as translated in Brockey 2002. Brunner (1964, 157) also suggests that Christian converts probably imitated the chanting of Buddhist monks, or that they used the melody used to chant poems, or that they just reproduced the way primers were chanted to learn characters.

(church janitors), and messengers (called *cursores*). We have only a fragmentary picture of these lay personnel, but, especially during the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods, they played an important role in sustaining the life of the community. Young men (*mozos*), occasionally called *doxicos* or *dojicos*, a word first used in the Japanese mission to indicate male “lay brothers,” worked as domestics, sacristans, and secretaries of the priests, and many of them remained in the employment of the missionaries until death. Although their attachment to the friars may have been eminently economic, some demonstrated great loyalty to their masters and to Catholicism in the face of persecution. Some even entered the Dominican First Order as priests, as in the case of Gregorio Luo Wenzao, who joined the missionaries as a *dojico* in his teens and eventually became the first Chinese bishop.⁵⁸

The messengers transported mail, money, books, and devotional objects from Manila and Macau to Fujian and back. In Mindong, the missionaries paid them for their services, and in the 1740s, out of an annual subsidy of 550 Spanish pesos (equivalent to around 412 taels) received from Manila-Macau, messengers received a stipend (*gongzi* 工資) of 10 pesos (ca. 7.5 taels) each for the three-month round-trip to Macau. In the late 1770s, Bishop Francisco Pallás (1706–78) even established a special endowment in Manila to pay for their expenses. Most of them were married men with a family to support, engaged in productive activities on their own (either agriculture or peddling). They worked as messengers in winter, during the dead season for agriculture (September–October to January). Their religious commitment varied, and, in fact, those arrested in 1746 abjured.⁵⁹

58. The *dojicos* (Japanese *dōjuku*) were young male native “brothers” who helped the Jesuit fathers in their religious and daily duties. The Japanese word *dōjuku* indicated the young students living in Buddhist monastic schools in Japan. For the meaning of *dojicos*, see Ruiz-de-Medina 1999. Gregorio Luo Wenzao was a dutiful *dojico* in the 1630s together with two other Fuan natives, Manuel Lin [Lim], and Antonio Ruan [Yuen], and accompanied some Franciscans to Beijing in 1637; see Perez 1915–16, 583. As Pedro Sanz lamented in 1738, however, his young servants (*mozos*) felt so comfortable in the missionary residence that when they were sent out on business, “they would say like St. Peter *bonum est nos hic esse* [we feel comfortable here], and they would not let go their rice gruel, in spite of its high price due to the current famine”; see letter by Sanz to Miralta, June 29, 1738, in GM, 2: 30.

59. With regard to the messengers’ stipends, Qing sources refer to “large and small foreign coins,” probably corresponding to silver pesos and reales (1 peso = 8 reales). One peso was equivalent to ca. 0.75 of a silver tael (cf. SF, 3: 433–34; von

By the late seventeenth century, inspired by the clergy, lay people formed devotional confraternities, which were especially popular in the Jesuit mission. Over time, the Dominicans also gradually helped organize religious groups in order to channel the devotional life of Mindong Christians as well as to support the daily workings of the community. Although families remained the first place where some elementary religious education was taught to children and prayers like the rosary were customarily recited, communal ritual life thrived and persisted, even in time of suppression, through devotional groups. The first such organization to be introduced was, in the 1630s, the Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic, a lay branch of the Dominican "First Order." At the same time, and almost spontaneously, another overlapping religious institution developed: the *beatas* (literally "the Blessed [Virgins]"). These two institutions were "elite" groups, accessible to the laity only after Dominican approval. Both entailed strict religious obligations. In the early eighteenth century, the Dominicans also established the Confraternity of the Rosary, which was a devotional group open to most believers and closely modeled on European prototypes.⁶⁰

Paradoxically, the most coherent picture of the internal organization of Mindong Christianity can be found in Qing government memorials. In an effort to clarify the hierarchical structure of the Christian communities, provincial authorities in the 1740s, following more than a century of evangelization, plotted out the different roles assigned to the leaders they had arrested in Fuan. The first role that Fujian Governor Zhou Xuejian mentioned in his memorials was that of *jiaozhu* 教主 (religious leader), which applied only to the priests. Then the memorials referred to *tangzhu* 堂主 (hall heads, sacristans), who were likely

Glahn 1996, 135). The silver pesos were coined in Mexico, and in mid-eighteenth century Philippines they were sliced (*moneda cortada*) and stamped by local authorities with their value (4 or 2 reales); however, the Chinese merchants of Manila would send their profits to Fujian only in unadulterated Mexican pesos; see Corpuz 1997, 57, 180, 225. It could be the case that missionaries were receiving from Manila whole pesos (= large coins) as well as *moneda cortada* (= small coins). For confessions of some *cursores*, see AMEP, vol. 436, f. 137 (YQTW, doc. 34, 140). On the endowment, see GH, 2: 547.

60. Girard 2000, 311–28, explores some of the activity of these Christian men, whom she calls *auxiliaires indigènes*; for the lay organization of Jesuit communities, see Golvers 1999, 412–21. On Jesuit catechists, see Bornet 1944; Biais 1997; HCC, 470–73; and Brockey 2007, *passim*; on Jesuit confraternities in China, see Bornet 1948; Dehergne 1956; Margiotti 1962–63; HCC, 456–61; and Brockey 2007, 328–401.

responsible for keeping the chapels clean and open for rituals. The *tangzhu* also conducted catechetical and devotional activities when the priests were not available, as was the case with the elderly *shengyuan* and prayer leader (*niantou* 念頭), Domingo Chen Chou from Muyang, who confessed in 1746 that he had been “in charge of the administration of the church” (*naguan jingtang* 拿管經堂) for a long time, and that in such position he would “encourage (*quan* 勸) people to join the teachings.” Since there were separate chapels for men and women, *tangzhu/niantou* may well have been both male and female. In one instance, a convert is called *zongtang[zhu]* 總堂[主] (general hall head) apparently denoting a leadership role over other *tangzhu*. Authorities also uncovered a network of *jiaozhang* 教掌 (religious experts, catechists), both male and female (the women labeled as such were in fact *beatas*), whose job apparently consisted of teaching. In another memorial, the Fuzhou General Sinju mentioned the term *huiizhang* 會長 (congregational leaders or group heads), possibly a reference to priors of the Third Order or to the rotating presidents of the Confraternity of the Rosary, “in charge of administering the duties related to their teachings” and of supervising groups of fifteen Christians each. It remains unclear to what degree these roles were distinct, and, except for *huiizhang*, the Qing authorities’ terminology cannot be found in missionary sources. But what emerges is a division between those in charge of buildings (*tang*) and those in charge of teachings (*jiao*), a faint perception of the logistical and devotional networks of the Christian community.⁶¹

The web of helpers and members of sodalities described thus far was ultimately family-based. Unmarried men or women, who were either tertiaries or catechists, were usually at the center of a network of converted relatives and sustained the network with their strong religious commitment and their personal relationship with the friars. Members of the Third Order stand out as the ones who directed the effective transmission of Christianity in Mindong through financial support and total personal commitment to religious life. Given the centrality of this institution of Christian life in Mindong, it is worth

61. On Chen Chou, see AMEP, vol. 436, ff. 140–39 [sic]. *Jiaozhu*, *tangzhu*, and *zongtang* can be found in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 56, 78–82, QL 11/5/12 (June 30, 1746); *tangzhu* and *jiaozhang* in QTS, vol. 1, doc. 93, 154–57, QL 11/5/28 (July 16, 1746); cf. also QTS, vol. 1, doc. 57, 82–84, QL 11/5/24 (July 12, 1746).

exploring in detail why it attracted such committed individuals and how it further promoted the localization and rooting of Christianity in the region.

The Third Order

The term “third order” in general signifies lay members of religious orders. They are men and women who do not necessarily live in a religious community and yet can wear the habit and participate in the spiritual and charitable activities of male and female religious orders, which are known as “first orders” and “second orders,” respectively. The Third Order of Penance of Saint Dominic, affiliated with the Dominicans and known in Chinese as *San hui* 三會, originated in the spiritual climate of the penitential movements of the European Middle Ages. The Third Order obtained church approval of its first rule in 1284 as a form of lay affiliation to the Dominican Order. The rule specifies a distinction between “private tertiaries,” that is, individuals following the rules and practices of the order in noncloistered life (men and women), and “tertiaries of strict observance” (women only). Initially the latter, often called *beatas*, had lived as hermits in private dwellings, but by the seventeenth century they congregated in religious communities under church pressure and were eventually absorbed into the Second Order. On the other hand, private tertiaries wished to have some form of connection to monastic life while remaining in the secular world. They tried to emulate the regime of prayer of friars and nuns; engaged in various penitential practices (self-flagellation; wearing of hair shirt etc.); adopted a strict schedule of fasting and abstinence; remained virgin if unmarried, chaste if widowed; or, if married, refrained from sexual contacts on fast days. Charitable activities were also among their duties. Admission was subject to approval by a Dominican priest as well as by the Third Order lay prior or prioress and required the taking of special vows (among them, a vow of chastity for some). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the rise in Europe of a more private sense of spiritual life ushered in a trend among members of the Third Order to practice meditation, frequent confession and communion, and spiritual retreats. Third Order members also engaged in other devotional practices, such as the recitation of the rosary and the fulfillment of the obligations necessary for obtaining papal indulgences, both for

oneself or for the souls of the departed (attending masses and doing penance, among other acts).⁶²

Upon arriving in Mindong, the Dominicans immediately introduced the institution of the Third Order. Sources refer to several men and a few women who became private tertiaries, leading a regular lay lifestyle interspersed by pious activities, sometimes acting as catechists or sacristans. Among male tertiaries in the early period of the mission we find one of the first Dominican converts of Fuan, the commoner Andrés Huang. Soon after converting, he asked to join the Third Order. Contemporary documents report that “after admirably completing his novitiate, he professed according to the rules of the Third Order, although his life was so reformed that he [could be considered] a member of the First Order. He lived like a priest, in perfection, without missing any fast day and the penances of religious life even when he was ill, exercising himself daily in mental prayer.” Huang was a married, literate man of some means. Even before conversion, he enforced on his wife Teresa strict rules against anything “dishonest,” and kept her female friends out of his house, to “prevent gossip and laziness.” After conversion, he convinced her to “be sexually continent, separating their nuptial bed, and observing perpetual chastity.” He was clearly a “moral fundamentalist” even before becoming Christian. As we saw above, another prominent Christian, Joaquín Guo Bangyong, traveled to Manila as a widower in 1638, and for two years remained in a Dominican priory in the province of Bataán, practicing the rules of religious life and solemnly professing in the Third Order before returning to Fuan in 1642. Furthermore, the eulogies of the dead in the Mindong mission as found in the Acts of the Dominican Chapters of Manila in the first half of the eighteenth century reveal that Dominican tertiaries included a number of men from the Chen lineage of Fuan and the Miao lineage of Muyang. Some of them received high praises for their ascetic lives and their life-long chastity. The literatus of Muyang Raymundo Miao “Tining” (1670s–ca. 1743), for example, dedicated his whole life to church service as a tertiary, remaining unmarried, scrupulously observing the order’s rules, teaching catechism, performing acts of charity for the poor, and investing his wealth in the

62. Boaga 1973–97.

construction of a “large and magnificent church” (*templum magnum magnificumque*) in his village.⁶³

The attraction of membership in the Third Order was, at least initially, based on the desire to partake of special spiritual powers. Local Christians were asking for miracles and visionary experiences, similar to those that they may have witnessed at local festivals, where mediums of Daoist inspiration were possessed by gods and performed rituals of healing; or they were in search of salvation in ways that resonated with Buddhist practices. This kind of popular religious sensibility is occasionally described by missionary sources. In 1648 Juan García related some friction between Dominicans and Franciscans over the Third Order’s membership in Mindong, revealing the motivations of local Christians in joining the organization. In the mid-1630s, newly arrived Franciscans started admitting local Christians to the Franciscan Third Order quite liberally, giving them the habit, abolishing the use of the rosary that the Dominicans had introduced, and proposing instead the *corona*. The *corona*, a short version of the rosary typical of Franciscans, was painted as a better and easier devotion. Soon Christians accused the Dominicans of being too exacting and started congregating outside the Dominican church to recite the Franciscan *corona*. Some Franciscans even secretly issued membership patents, establishing *prelados* (leaders) of the Third Order, with the privileges of giving the habit to others and blessing the cordon (a rope used as belt), their emblem of membership. The Dominican García scornfully observed that “it was all asking cordons and rosary beads of Sister Juana, and things of Mother Luisa, and since they had misunderstood, they thought that all Tertiaries were saved [from damnation].” Such Franciscan tertiaries, García continued, were ignorant of the basic commandments and sacraments, and “acting

63. On the novitiate of Huang and his relationship with his wife, see RH, f. 218v and RH, f. 221r. His spiritual life was closely monitored by Juan García, and a relatively long hagiographic account of his Christian life written by Fr. Victorio Riccio, entitled “Vida y muerte dichosa de Andrés Hoang, de la tercera orden de Santo Domingo,” describes in some detail his charitable and catechetical activities. On the hagiographic motif of chaste marriage, see, e.g., McGlynn and Moll 1996. On Guo Bangyong’s novitiate, see RH, ff. 234v–39v. On Miao Tining, see *Acta* 1877, 289. Miao “Tining” could possibly be identified with Miao Tianlin (1674–1743), a descendant of Miao Shixiang (see Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 161, and 2009, 222), whose Christian name, however, is recorded in earlier sources as Tomás, not Raymundo.

like children, they thought that they were priests." In Dingtong, they even worshipped an image of Mother Luisa (likely a Franciscan mystic), who, since she was still alive, was therefore not a legitimate "saint." This apparent dispute over "style" between the two mendicant orders reveals the preference of local Christians for a simpler, but in their eyes, more efficacious devotional practice, based on the use of repeated prayer in short sequences endowed with many papal indulgences (the *corona*), symbols (the cordon; the habit), and relics and icons ("things" of Sister Juana and Mother Luisa), and less centered on doctrinal contents and priestly rituals (the commandments; the sacraments). This shows a strong pull on the part of the laity to manage the divine powers deriving from prayers, relics, and religious organization, without priestly intermediaries.⁶⁴

The case of the tertiary Catalina "Sang-so" of Dingtong illustrates well the potential risks of "religious entrepreneurship" for the Dominicans and traditional male clerical dominance. In 1642, Catalina, a married woman of poor background, began experiencing visions and falling into trances, three years after her baptism. She became a "Christian medium": her body would become rigid and insensitive during visions, and only the voice of the missionary could restore her senses. Even when the missionary was afar, it would be enough for him to call her

64. On the Franciscan Third Order in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China, see Mungello 2001, 82–83. On this episode of conflict between Dominicans and Franciscans over the Third Order, see Juan García 1648, ff. 54v–55r. The *corona* (in English also known as "Franciscan crown" or "Seraphic rosary") originated in fifteenth-century Italy within the Franciscan order and quickly spread in all the locations reached by the friars. It is a form of recitation of the rosary that centers on the "seven joys" in the life of the Virgin Mary, rather than on the three cycles of mysteries of the life of Christ. The seven joys according to the Franciscan popular tradition are: annunciation, visitation, nativity, adoration of the Magi, finding of Jesus in the temple, Jesus's resurrection, and assumption and/or coronation of Mary in heaven (these two joys can be combined or used alternatively). The faithful use a shortened rosary (called "corona" in reference to a "wreath" of flowers) to count a daily sequence of seven decades of Hail Marys, intercalated by the recitation of prayers on the seven joys. This devotion is markedly shorter than the recitation of an entire rosary in the Dominican tradition (up to 250 Hail Marys) and does not require blessed rosary beads, which can actually be dispensed with completely. It is also the form of prayer that has received the highest number of papal indulgences ever, and its ease of use and copious spiritual benefits seem to have been a reason for its popular appeal. For a historical examination of this devotion, see Bracaloni 1932.

mentally, and she would be awakened from her trance and would start weeping. During the celebration of the eucharist, she saw a beautiful baby in the host, and the Virgin Mary appeared to her often. When engaged in domestic work, an angel materialized to help her. During prayer, the devil appeared to her in horrible forms and struggled with her. Her powers were so unusual that the missionaries started thinking they were coming from the devil, not from God. Francisco Capillas wrote in 1647: "Thus the Lord enlightened us, so that we would know that all the raptures and the extraordinary things happening to Catalina . . . were from the devil, who wanted to disrupt our church." Catalina subsequently disappeared from the annals of the burgeoning church of Fuan. Another woman of humble origins (*cristiana sencilla*) performed some miraculous acts, and the friars concluded that she was the devil's victim. They forbade the Christians from inscribing the woman's visions on a scroll and hanging it in the church, as some wanted.⁶⁵

Given these cases, it is little surprise that, as had been the case in Europe for centuries, the Dominicans saw the imposition of rules on tertiaries as the best way to control their spiritual eccentricities. All members of the Third Order had to go through a probationary "novitiate," which followed the rules of conduct issued in 1284. Although no specimen of the original Chinese-language Third Order rules is available in its entirety, such a text was likely produced at the beginning of the mission, as we gather from references to it in a 1741 Chinese-language amendment to the rules. The rules specified who could join the order, the shape of the habit and the ceremonies of profession, the members' duties in performing devotions, prayer, charity, and penances, and the responsibilities of the priors or prioresses.⁶⁶

With the passing of time, Dominicans also decided to offer to the most devoted women in Mindong more demanding and radical religious choices. In their Chinese texts the missionaries presented the two standard models of religious life available to women in the West: "The first

65. Quotation from Capillas 1894, 67. Similar visionary women had also been condemned in Spain in the last quarter of the sixteenth century; see Iwasaki 1993, 75.

66. Since the rules are listed by Royo in a different numerical order than the medieval prototype, we can speculate that they either underwent some modifications in the Chinese text, or that some later edition of the original must have been used; on the 1284 rule, see Ramos 1964, 53–78.

kind of [sisters] stays forever in a building, whose walls are high and thick. Men and women from outside are forbidden from entering, and not even one's parents are allowed to enter. . . . The second kind stays at home."⁶⁷ In Mindong, a group of dedicated women tertiaries eventually chose to follow this second path of religious life as members of the Third Order at home and thus revived the lifestyle of the early non-cloistered female tertiaries of strict observance and *beatas*. Such a life confined them to the house and precluded the possibility of undesired and uncontrollable "spiritual gifts." Chapter 8 offers a full discussion of the *beatas'* life within the context of women's activities in the Fuan Christian community as a whole and shows the leadership roles and the prestige they held among fellow Christians and local social circles.

In the final analysis, the religious commitments of male and female tertiaries stemmed from the spiritual benefits they perceived they could gain from Christianity. Some Christians arrested in 1747 clearly stated to their interrogators that they had converted "for the several benefits [of our teachings], not because we coveted money." These "benefits" consisted mainly of the remission of sins in this life and in salvation after death. *Beatas* and tertiaries sought to reap these spiritual remunerations through a life of full religious dedication. For common Christians, who had to remain part of the secular world, however, activities within confraternities offered an easier way toward the same goal.⁶⁸

The Confraternity of the Rosary

Most Christians could not commit to spiritual activities as fully as tertiaries or *beatas* and engaged in monthly devotions, especially oral prayer. To support the devotional life of these converts, beginning in the late Kangxi period (1710s–1720s) the friars petitioned the Dominican master general in Rome for permission to establish the Confraternity of the Rosary, the Confraternity of the Girdle of St. Thomas, and

67. González de San Pedro 1920, 11. My translations of the more accessible 1920 edition (see, e.g., a copy in the Bibliothèque des Missions Étrangères de Paris, Paris) incorporate corrections based on the original 1706 edition (González de San Pedro 1706b).

68. Quotation from AMEP, vol. 436, f. 138 (YQTW, doc. 34, 139). On the whole, the confessions of Christians in AMEP, vol. 436 (YQTW, doc. 34), support this view of the spiritual benefits of Christianity in their eyes.

the Confraternity of the Name of Jesus, all of which were affiliated with the Dominicans.⁶⁹

In Europe, these groups were eminently devotional and performed limited charitable functions. Their main aims were the accumulation of merits for the individual members, the earning of indulgences for souls in purgatory, and the organization of processions and special functions. Dominican sources mention the Confraternity of the Rosary (*Meigui jing hui* 玫瑰經會, literally “Society of the Rose Prayer”) as the only active one in China. The organization was first founded by the vicar apostolic of Fujian, the Dominican Magino Ventallol in the early eighteenth century in Minnan, in the village of Houban 后坂 near Zhangzhou. By 1713 at least two separate branches, one for men and one for women, existed. In the 1750s, Diego Terradillos (1718–71) established one in Fuzhou and probably also in Mindong.⁷⁰

Membership in the fraternity was obtained by application to a Dominican priest, and only members could accrue benefits. Dead people could be enlisted, since others could pray on their behalf. Everybody, “rich and poor, man and woman, old and young, disabled and sick,” was allowed to join. Merit was gained through recitation of the rosary, and members usually practiced privately. Only on the first Sunday of the month were members called to gather for common prayer. Special masses were also celebrated for the souls of dead members on a series of Marian feast days. The leaders of the confraternity consisted of an elected president (*huizhang* 會長) and two prefects (*huisi* 會司):

The job of the president is to lead others in their duties and correct the faults of members, and all members should humbly listen to the president’s orders. The

69. References to such confraternities can be found in GH, 2: 296, quoting a letter by Pablo Matheu (1721) and another by Eusebio Oscot (1731, 441), referring to a letter by Diego Terradillos (1756).

70. The word *jing* 經 (usually translated “scripture” or “sutra”) is used in Chinese Catholicism for “prayer”; the expression *meigui jing* thus indicates the “prayer of the rose flower,” i.e., the rosary. Similarly, *Tianzhu jing* 天主經 indicates the Our Father, and *Shengmu jing* 聖母經 the Hail Mary. On the Confraternities of the Rosary in the Dominican tradition, see, e.g., Lea 1968, 3: 484–90. On the petition by China Dominicans to Rome, see Ly 1959, doc. 105, 50, referring to the Brief by Clemens XI of February 25, 1713, *Exponi nobis nuper*, granting permission to the master general of the Dominicans for the establishment of “another Confraternity of the Holy Rosary for women” in the China mission, quite likely in Zhangzhou. On the congregation’s founding, see also Ventallol, post-1718. Biographical material on Ventallol in Ocio 1891, 194–95, and 1895, 242; and GH, 2: 226–27.

prefects' job is to manage the assets owned by the confraternity. One prefect has the keys [of the meeting place] to open and close [the door]; another prefect keeps a register of income and expenses, and at the end of the year closes the accounts and turns [them over to the next appointee].

The rules also suggested that members, as a meritorious deed, encourage the sick to confess and escort the holy sacrament to the house of the sick. If that was impossible, they were to kneel along the route at the sound of the bell accompanying the sacrament. In case of death of a member, merit could be gained by paying for the celebration of masses, as well for a funerary ceremony at which a banner of Our Lady symbolizing the confraternity could be brought.⁷¹

But, as clearly stated in the preface to the rules, the main purpose of the confraternity was to obtain absolution of one's sins in order to "ascend the path of Heaven" and to gain indulgences for the souls of the dead in purgatory (*lianyu* 煉獄):

All those who recite this prayer [the rosary] will be bestowed with grace by the Lord of Heaven, and through the remission of sins they will ascend the path of Heaven. From its beginning until today, many in the whole world (*tianxia*) have entered this fraternity, and many have recited this prayer, many have received the merciful spiritual benefits of the Holy Mother who has performed numerous miracles. Over time many popes have granted great [i.e., plenary] and small [i.e., partial] indulgences (*she* 赦) to this fraternity. Here I humbly enclose the rules and the indulgences of this fraternity, so that those who have not yet joined it may follow the rules of admission to join it, and those who entered it can cherish its benefits and diligently respect the rules. . . . If one desires to obtain such grace, one must confess in repentance, and take communion without being in sinful state. Otherwise, the state of sinfulness will prevent the indulgence, and how will it then be possible to have the penalty for the purgatorial sins remitted?⁷²

The confraternity's central aim, of earning indulgence for oneself and the departed, derived both from a Catholic tradition and from Chinese concerns. Indulgences in the Catholic tradition were granted only by the pope and consisted of a diminishing or canceling of the punishment that God meted out at the time of judgment passed at the moment of death over the souls in purgatory; souls in hell had no

71. On the duties of officers, the procession, and charitable activities, see Ventallol post-1718, preface; articles 30 and 31, 7a and 17a, respectively.

72. Ibid., preface, 1a-b.

recourse. Living people could obtain this “suffrage” from the church thanks to their meritorious deeds or their prayers. The Virgin Mary and the saints were considered powerful intercessors in this process, not unlike the Chinese Buddhist monk Mulian 目連 rescuing his mother from purgatory. Given the importance of filial piety in China, the Catholic system of indulgences proved to be quite attractive to Christians, who could gain the salvation of their baptized ancestors through their merits and prayers. Most of the rules’ text was nothing but a long list of special indulgences of the confraternity and of the popes who had granted them, a sort of bureaucratic ledger and a mechanical device to win the suffrage and the subsequent earning of mercy in the afterlife.⁷³

The only public activity of the confraternity mentioned in the rules was a communal “welcoming” of the Holy Mother (*yuying Shengmu* 與迎聖母), that is, a procession with her statue. The procession entailed special rituals and indulgences. Festive occasions such as processions could be sponsored only by large temple organizations backed by local lineages and connected with legitimate local cults. In the case of the Confraternity of the Rosary, we do not know if processions could occur during peaceful periods outside the church compound without arousing the opposition of local cultic organizations, but the mention in the statutes of such a ritual occurrence suggests that it might have happened by the eighteenth century.⁷⁴

73. On indulgences in the China mission, see HCC, 625–626; and Menegon 2006a, 75–84.

74. The expression *yuying* 與迎 (literally “to jointly welcome”; Ventallol post-1718, 7b) indicates the Catholic procession of the saints and is close to the idea of *yingshen* 迎神 (welcoming the gods), the Chinese procession in honor of local gods, which included perambulation of the territory with a statue of the divinity accompanied by musical instruments. The Dominican Varo in his seventeenth-century Spanish-Chinese dictionary records two kinds of processions: *procesion nuestra de los santos* (our [Christian] procession of the saints), which he translates as *youyu* 遊與/遇 (to perambulate and meet), *youzhan* 遊瞻 (to perambulate and display), *yingsong* 迎送 (to welcome and accompany), *youjie* 遊街 (to perambulate the streets), or *xingxiang* 行香 (to walk with incense); and *procesion de los bonzos* (procession of the bonzes), which he translates as *jiao* 醮 (an expression usually describing Daoist grand ceremonies); see Coblin 2006, 464. On similarity between Christian and non-Christian religious groups and their processions and activities, see Standaert 1988, 62–69. On “sutra-recitational sects,” see Overmyer 1976, 186–89; and Naquin 1985, 261.

A description of a procession in the village of Houban (Zhangzhou), dating to 1864, gives an idea of what it might have looked like there and, possibly, elsewhere earlier:

Almost all men and women are members of the Confraternity of the Rosary, and all of them contribute with generous alms to make the festival [of the Rosary] very solemn. Before the festival, they start a novena prayer cycle with music and sermons every day for nine days. On the eighth day, after the evening functions, the statue of Mary Queen of Angels is taken down from its throne and paraded in procession around the village. Delegations from the different Christian communities of Zhangzhou prefecture bring their religious banners, and two musical bands accompany the many members who illuminate the village streets with torches and candles. The beautiful ivory statue of the Virgin stops in some places, especially in front of the house of its old owner [who donated it]. In the meanwhile firecrackers echo in the sky, the participants sing the *Salve Regina* . . . and immediately afterward the musicians start again their Chinese harmonies, and the procession returns to the church. The women do not participate in the procession, and the men are those who recite in high voice the rosary all along.⁷⁵

Once again, a tradition well-known both in Chinese religion and in Catholicism was adopted by Chinese Christians, further contributing to integration of Christianity in the local world of Fujian.

The process of ritual entrenchment of Christianity in Mindong, explored in this chapter, developed on multiple levels. Catholic priests in their roles as exorcists, healers, and keepers of the sacramental keys to paradise catered to the needs of physical well-being and salvation for late imperial Chinese people, operating within a competitive world of religious specialists. Christians, conversely, found in Catholic devotions and religious organization a way to sustain and structure their spiritual experience and their interactions with fellow community members and outsiders. But how could they negotiate the range of values introduced by the new faith with their lived experiences and assure their transmission to their descendants? The next two chapters map out the controversies surrounding ancestral rituals, marriage, and women's status, precisely to understand the reception mechanisms of new Christian values and ritual practices within the socio-religious world of Mindong.

75. Gentili 1887–88, 3: 164, 215; earlier processions were within church premises.

SEVEN

Filial Piety, Ancestral Rituals, and Salvation

In mid-1635, the Franciscan Antonio Caballero, a fresh addition to the Dominican mission in Fuan, encountered the character *ji* 祭, “sacrifice,” in his studies. Caballero asked his teacher Tadeo Wang (Wang Tadou 王達陡) its meaning. Tadeo defined it in several ways, and finally, in an attempt to simplify his explanation, he told his foreign student that it corresponded to the Catholic mass. The definition alarmed the Franciscan. Tadeo also explained to Caballero that “in this kingdom people present offerings and sacrifices of boiled rice . . . , of wine, of meat, of candles and incense to their ancestors. Christians do the same, since they consider [these ceremonies] very good and licit, trusting the authority of Fr. Giulio Aleni of the Society [of Jesus], and consequently the authority of all the remaining Fathers of the Society.” Caballero immediately wrote to his Dominican companion in Dingtou, Juan Bautista de Morales, and voiced his suspicion that in the Chinese mind a superstitious notion of sacrifice was polluting the Catholic liturgy. When he learned all this, Morales interrogated the Christians of Dingtou and discovered that they indeed had tablets at home and made offerings to the ancestors, following the tolerant policy of the Jesuits.¹

1. Quotation from Morales and Caballero, “Segunda Informacion,” as quoted in Margiotti 1978, 127. An account of this incident in Fuan, originally in chap. 8 of

The two friars organized a secret expedition to observe the Miao lineage of Muyang celebrate the seasonal ancestral rituals in their grand ancestral hall. The foreign priests stood unnoticed in the back of the crowd of celebrants, who were already engaged in the preliminary phases of the ceremony. They could thus get a good glimpse of the proceedings inside the hall. Food offerings, flowers, and incense holders, displayed on several tables, occupied part of the building's courtyard and were positioned in front of a "tabernacle" containing the ancestral tablets. Great quantities of paper money, to be burned for the welfare of the souls, were at hand. Many licentiates, wearing the insignia of their class, crowded the courtyard, and among them one acted as main sacrificer (*zhuji* 主祭). The Dominican Morales gave this man the title of "priest." The two licentiates assisting him were the "deacon" and "sub-deacon" (*fuji* 副祭). Another licentiate, acting as master of ceremonies (*lisheng* 禮生), directed the crowd's prostrations. Aside from these roles, there were others who acted as "acolytes." The friars noticed that the licentiates presiding as main sacrificer and as master of ceremonies, as well as several other assistants, were Christians. After observing the prostrations and ritual offerings, hearing the prayers and the chanting, the friars decided that the rituals reminded them of the ancient ceremonies of pagan peoples mentioned in the Bible. In fact, the friars thought the rituals of Muyang a demonic parody of the Catholic mass; Caballero and Morales even used Catholic terminology to label the ritual roles and implements. In the Europeans' eyes, ceremonies that should have been reserved for the worship of God alone were being improperly used to worship the ancestors.²

Tadeo Wang had candidly told Caballero that Christians kept tablets at home and continued to participate in ancestral rituals "trusting the authority of Fr. Giulio Aleni . . . , and consequently the authority of all the remaining Fathers of the Society [of Jesus]." How, wondered the friars, could the Jesuits tolerate among Christians these superstitious and idolatrous rites? Contemporary sources, both Western and Chinese, attest that the Jesuits, over the first five decades of their mission, had indeed developed an open attitude toward ancestral reverence and

Morales's "*Historia evangelica de China*," a manuscript now lost, has been preserved in Navarrete's *Controversias*; see Biermann 1927, 44n61. On Tadeo Wang, see Morales et al. 1650s?, f. 43r.

2. The friars' visit to Muyang is described in Margiotti 1978.

promoted a “purified” version of the rites with the help and at the suggestion of their most prominent converts. This tolerant attitude is well illustrated by a conversation in the important Fujianese coastal town of Fuqing during the summer of 1634, barely a year before the friars’ discovery of Christian ancestral rituals in Fuan. The non-Christian literatus Fei Zhongzun 費中遵 asked Aleni whether “in the families of converts the ancestral images are destroyed and discarded,” as he had heard. Aleni denied the charge: “That is a false rumor. Our religious rules do not contain anything like that. . . . In [China] quite a number of families of the local gentry, both scholars and commoners, have been converted, but their attitude of filial piety and love . . . has not changed at all.” According to Aleni, Buddhists and Daoists had fabricated those rumors. They had knowingly blurred the strict Christian policy against the presence of images of their “evil gods” on domestic ancestral altars, with the wholesale destruction of all symbols of the ancestral cult, something the Jesuits never ordered. “Because in converts’ families only the true Lord is worshipped,” continued Aleni, “Christians have thrown away all their inherited demonic idols made of clay and wood, and as a result people say that they have destroyed their family halls, including their ancestral images.”³ Aleni’s answers to Fei, while showing absolute opposition to the worship of Daoist and Buddhist deities, at the same time revealed the Jesuits’ tolerant attitude toward ancestral practice among Fujianese Christians in the 1630s.

The Jesuit willingness to accommodate some local practices stands in stark contrast to the strict attitude of the friars. Following the 1635 episode in Muyang, three of the friars traveled to Fuzhou and presented their objections to Jesuit Vice Provincial Francisco Furtado (1589–1653). Furtado explained the Jesuit position and reassured the friars that tolerance of ancestral veneration was based on many examinations and consultations of the old fathers and superiors. The friars apparently expressed satisfaction with his response. Soon, however, it became apparent that this was only a temporary truce: a few days later, the Jesuits in Fuzhou received a letter from some Fuan Christians complaining of the severity with which the friars had forbidden reverence for the portraits of the ancestors. These initial prohibitions, followed by broader fulminations against all ritual expressions connected to ancestral devotion, provoked a profound crisis among local Christians. As a consequence, in the 1630s

3. *Kouduo richao*, 6.1b, in CCT ARSI, 7: 388 (Zürcher, trans., 2007, 479).

and 1640s, the Fuan faithful were forced to develop a new understanding of ancestral rituals, which increasingly distinguished them from Chinese Christian communities under Jesuit ministry.⁴

This and the following chapter examine how Dominican religious policies, which tampered with two ideological pillars of the Chinese social world—ancestral rituals and women's subordinate position within the patriarchal system—could become acceptable to converts in Fuan and eventually shape their local religious identity. This chapter focuses on Christian attempts to reform the ideological basis and ritual elements of ancestral practices in Fuan.

Late Ming Controversies: Jesuits and Friars

Before we examine the Christian controversies over ancestral rites in Mindong, a brief description of the physical location and the objects of Dominican censure is in order. In late imperial times, family shrines and lineage halls were the two main sites of ancestral reverence. The friars' zeal targeted both. Through the ritual celebration of agnatic descent according to the established template of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, both home shrines and lineage halls symbolically expressed the social control that patriarchal organizations exercised over local society. In private home altars, especially if the family was poor and could not afford a special room for the shrine, ancestors (i.e., lineal agnatic forebears and occasionally their wives) were symbolically represented by inscribed wooden tablets or slips of paper in poor households. These tablets often shared space with images of Daoist, Buddhist, and other popular gods. As soon as a family member passed away, relatives prepared a temporary silk banner carrying his or her name, followed by the expression *lingwei* 靈位 (seat of the soul). A wooden tablet, known as a *muzhu* 木主, was then commissioned for the day of the burial. Simple in shape, it was painted black and contained two sets of inscriptions, one hidden from view, including the rank (if any) of the person, and a shorter, visible one, repeating some of the same information, but adding the name of the son who presided over the ceremonies. Both inscriptions on the

4. On the letter by Fuan Christians to the Jesuits, see Francisco Furtado, "Epistola Patris Francisci Furtado Vice-Provincialis Sinensis die 10 Novembris, anno 1636, scripta admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri P. Mutio Vitelleschi Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu," in Furtado 1700, 9–10, 15.

muzhu were followed by the characters *shenzhu* 神主 (spirit tablet). The *muzhu* tablet used during the funeral was thought to become inhabited, during the burial, with the soul of the deceased. At the end of the inscription was an incomplete character: *zhu* 主, written as *wang* 王. That character was “dotted” only at the time of the tablet’s installation on the domestic altar, to signify the descent of the spirit into the tablet. In Fujian, small home altars (*jiatang* 家堂) usually contained the *muzhu* tablets of the recent generations’ ancestors, as confirmed by nineteenth-century descriptions of family shrines from the Fuzhou region. But whereas only the eldest son kept individual tablets for multiple generations of ancestors, a younger son, upon establishing his own household, would set up a common tablet for all the ancestors in the last three to five generations. Fujianese villagers displayed portraits of the ancestors over the domestic altar for the first ten days of the year and then stored them under the altar for the rest of the year.⁵

Lineage ancestral halls, on the other hand, contained the tablets of the apical ancestor and those of members in subsequent generations in the lineage, male and female. At the death of a male head of a household, the *muzhu* tablets of more distant senior ancestors were sometimes transferred from the domestic shrine to the ancestral hall. More often than not, however, they were left at home. For the communal ancestral hall, families commissioned another kind of tablet, known as *shenwei*

5. As scholars have noted, local traditions inflected Zhu Xi’s generally accepted practice and injected modifications, including some of Buddhist origin, into the ritual sequence. Christian variations in the way ancestral veneration was expressed, therefore, would not be a completely new phenomenon, as was true also of the adaptation of Christian funerary rituals to local traditions in seventeenth-century southern China (Standaert 2008). On localized ritual modifications of Zhu Xi’s prescriptions, see Ebrey 1991; and Kutcher 1999, 52–53. For a description of the typology of tablets, see Feuchtwang 1974, 107; Ebrey 1991, 183; and Doolittle 1865, 225–30; on home tablets in the Fuzhou region (probably similar to those found in Mindong), see Doolittle 1865, 219–25; for a description of the types and shapes of tablets seen by missionaries, see, e.g., Varo 1680, ff. 96r–97v; and Waong 1941, which contains descriptions of the *muzhu* tablets in the ancestral hall of the Christian Xu family in Shanghai, descended from Xu Guangqi. On the dotting, see Varo 1680, ff. 100v–101v; Doolittle 1865, 207–8; and Naquin 1988, 42. There is a large historical and ethnographic literature on ancestral rituals; for Western-language titles, see L. Thompson 1987; L. Thompson et al. 1993; and L. Thompson and Seaman 1998. On use of portraits among villagers in Fujian, see Stuart and Rawski 2001, 169.

神位 (seat of the spirit), usually richly decorated and indicating the genealogical position of the deceased within the lineage. Following approval from lineage elders, these tablets were “enthroned” in the hall according to a canonical order known as *zhaomu*, in a ceremony that signaled acceptance of an ancestor as worthy of communal veneration and as a permanent deceased member of the lineage. The texts on the tablets varied but always mentioned the name of the departed and contained the expression “seat of the spirit” (*shenwei*). Ancestral portraits were also displayed during large-scale ceremonies in lineage ancestral halls. Both at home and in ancestral halls, rituals in front of the tablets involved food offerings that were generally believed to nourish the ancestral spirits. As prescribed in Zhu Xi’s *Family Rituals*, “the spirits were urged to eat” during the ceremony.⁶

It was within this context of private and public ancestral reverence that a tormented process of acceptance of Christian modifications of filial piety began in mid-seventeenth-century Mindong and continued well into the eighteenth century. The initial phase of this process, in the late Ming period, was particularly tense. The new priests’ indictment of ancestral rituals was a great shock for the Fuan literati converts, who had been educated in the Jesuit tradition. The friars refused to hear confession from those deemed guilty of the sin of superstition, and the most prominent Christian literati, Juan Miao Shixiang and Joaquín Guo Bangyong, agonized over the prohibitions. Miao wrote their old master Aleni in Fuzhou: “I am uncertain whether it is sinful to sacrifice to the dead ancestors, because you say that it is not so, but the Fathers of St. Dominic and St. Francis say it is. . . . Both Joaquín and I cannot sleep or eat due to the worry involved in thinking over this matter.”⁷ As the man who had baptized them and been their teacher since the mid-1620s, Aleni was the highest moral authority in the Fujian mission to whom they could appeal. Fuan Christian literati had indeed continued to perform ancestral obeisance, as noted in Chinese-language testimonies that the friars collected in 1635 and 1636. But these Christians had also infused the rites with Christian meanings that clearly reflected

6. On portraits used during lineage rituals, see Ebrey 1991, 184–85; on offerings, see *ibid.*, 155–56.

7. See “Carta [de Juan Miu al P. Julio Aleni],” Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1073, ff. 20v–21v, 1635?

current practices in Jesuit communities and the interpretations of Chinese Christian luminaries such as Yang Tingyun.⁸

This interpretation combined a Confucian attitude of respectful, yet detached, veneration of the spirits, with the Jesuit position of separating “religious” rituals from “civil” family obeisance. Caballero’s teacher Tadeo Wang, a *shengyuan* who had studied the basic Confucian curriculum, is representative of the lower-degree holders that formed most of the Christian leadership in Fuan. Wang’s words, as reported in Spanish-language testimonials, confirm the contemporary consensus on ancestral rituals among local Christians:

[Wang also said that Aleni] had approved a book entitled *Daiyi* [i.e., *Daiyi pian* 代疑篇], written by a Christian mandarin called Michael [Yang Tingyun], which contained such doctrine, that is, that Christians must perform, as they do, these offerings and sacrifices to their departed ancestors a few times each year, and that to do so is very important. He also added that Christians perform such sacrifices only with the intention to recognize and respect those who gave them life, and they do not pray to them, since the Christians well know that their ancestors are in hell, having died pagan. [Moreover, he said that Christians know that the ancestors] cannot improve their own condition, nor intervene in favor of the living, and they well know too that the ancestors’ souls cannot come down to receive and eat the offerings. Christians still perform [such rites] because their relatives are pagan, and the relatives would find it very objectionable if Christians abandon those sacrifices.⁹

Wang’s interpretation of the rites noted several important elements of the Christian reading that the Jesuits and their prominent Christian converts encouraged: the rituals were a ceremony of remembrance, not a sacrifice to divine entities; they did not entail prayers to obtain favors from the departed, who, being mostly non-Christians, were in any case damned; and, finally, the spirits of the ancestors could not actually

8. See Zürcher 1994, 41: “In order to understand the [opponents’] utter rejection of Ricci’s approach, we must realize that it was primarily based upon their assessment of the religious ideas and practices of the converts.” Here Zürcher refers to the friars’ criticisms of Yang Tingyun’s *Essays to Supplant Doubts* (*Daiyi pian*, 1621) and *More Essays to Supplant Doubts* (*Daiyi xupian* 代疑續篇, 1635); and Zhu Zongyuan’s 朱宗元 *Answers to the Queries of a Guest* (*Da kewen* 答客問, ca. 1647). On Yang’s works, see Standaert 1988, 70; on Zhu’s work, see Sachsenmaier 2001, 44–46.

9. Translation from Spanish of Morales and Caballero’s “Segunda Informacion,” as quoted in Margiotti 1978, 127.

descend into the tablets and eat the offerings presented to them. This reading of the rites also reflected the position of many neo-Confucian scholars, who saw ancestral rituals as instruments of moral direction for the family and tools of lineage building, and who tried to purify them from spurious accretions contradicting classical precedents. In daily practice, however, many more people attributed spiritual powers to the ancestors and saw them as divine entities who might bestow favors if pleased by the rituals and properly fed through the offerings. For the Catholic Church, the controversial nature of ancestral rituals derived precisely from the ambiguity that surrounded them: Were they, as many literati of the Ming-Qing period and the Jesuits thought, simply rituals of remembrance and respect? Or were they prayer sessions and spiritual channels of communication with the souls of semi-divinized ancestors who delivered prosperity, as the friars thought that common practice suggested? One of the most divisive issues was the interpretation of key Chinese terms, such as those applied to the various kinds of tablets (*lingwei*, *shenwei*, *shenzhu*, *muzhu*). Through philological arguments borrowed from the Chinese and European traditions, opponents tried to either deny or affirm that ancestral rituals and tablets were imbued with spiritual, almost divine, substance.¹⁰

Aleni's reply to his interlocutor in Fuqing shows that, in the Jesuit tradition, he objected to the veneration granted images of gods in home shrines but not to the presence of posthumous portraits, wooden tablets, and food offerings during funerals and ancestral ceremonies, "an expression of the son's sincere intention to treat the deceased one 'as if he were present.'" This Jesuit position was mainly based on Matteo Ricci's approach, succinctly expressed in his chronicle *Della Entrata della Compagnia di Giesù nella Cina*, a work he prepared for the Western public in Beijing from 1608 to 1610, and which was published in Europe in a Latin translation by Nicolas Trigault in 1615:

The most solemn matter among the literati, performed even by the king in all its details, is the annual offering of meat, fruit, incense, and silk—or paper among the poor—to their dead ancestors at certain times of the year. The reason [the Chinese] give for this observance on behalf of their ancestors is this,

10. On gentry advocacy of the purification of funerary and ancestral practices during the Ming and Qing periods, based on a critique of Buddhist influence, adherence to Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, and, starting in the early Qing, on philological study of the Classics, see Brook 1989; and Chow 1994, 71–128.

"to serve the dead as if they were living." Nor do they think that the dead come to eat these things, or have need of them; but they say they do it because they know of no other way of showing the love and gratitude they have for them. Some told us that this ceremony was instituted more for the living than the dead, that is, to teach the children and ignorant to acknowledge and serve their parents while alive, seeing that important people, once they are dead, perform for them the services they were accustomed to perform when they were alive. And since they neither recognize any divinity in these dead, nor ask anything of them, nor hope for anything from them, the practice is completely free from any idolatry, and perhaps could even be said to involve no superstition. Nevertheless, it would be better to replace this custom with giving alms to the poor for the souls of these dead, when they become Christians.¹¹

In Thomas Aquinas's normative interpretation, idolatry was a serious form of superstition. Ricci, therefore, in his attempt to salvage ancestral rituals, excluded idolatry, and he even ventured to exclude "superstition." By "superstition," Ricci probably meant lesser forms of improper religious rites, such as divination and magic.¹² He suggested, however, that Christians should be convinced, over time, to replace the ancestral sacrifices with alms-giving. Aleni also followed suit in his book *Answers to Questions on the West* (*Xifang dawen* 西方答問) and proposed the European model of respect for the deceased as an alternative to the Chinese rituals:

Ceremonies for the ancestors are very important in my native country. As for slaughtering animals for sacrifices, that was done in ancient times only in God's

11. See D'Elia, ed., 1942-49, 1: 117-18; cf. Rule 1986, 49. The expression "to serve the dead as if they were living" comes from the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong* 中庸), 19/5.

12. According to Thomas Aquinas, idolatry means to give divine honor (*cultus*) to things that are not God. The Council of Trent specified that "an essential difference exists between idolatry and the veneration of images practiced in the Catholic Church, viz., that while the idolater credits the image he reverences with Divinity or Divine powers, the Catholic knows 'that in images there is no divinity or virtue on account of which they are to be worshipped, that no petitions can be addressed to them, and that no trust is to be placed in them . . . that the honor which is given to them is referred to the objects (*prototypa*) which they represent, so that through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads and kneel, we adore Christ and venerate the Saints whose likenesses they are' (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXV, 'De invocatione Sanctorum')"; see CE, vol. 7, "Idolatry." Clearly, many Catholics past and present have looked at images as more than mere "likenesses" of the saints and attributed supernatural powers to them.

honor. Since God's incarnation among men in this world, the sacrifice of the mass has been established, and animal sacrifices are no longer used. Whoever reveres his ancestors has masses said for them, praying to God to protect their souls and grant them rest. This is of real benefit to the ancestors and increases their happiness in the other world. Their portraits are also painted and hung up in the household hall (*jiatang*) to serve as examples to their descendants, so that by looking at them these may be induced to imitate their ancestors' virtues. Sometimes food and drink are placed on the ancestors' graves; when the ceremony is over, the offerings are given to the church for distribution among the poor.¹³

Aleni's position thus seems to expand the recommendation advanced by Ricci "to replace this custom with giving alms to the poor for the souls of these dead." Christian literati, like the famous Hangzhou official Michael Yang Tingyun, a close friend of Aleni, fully endorsed this stance, as evident in one of his published works, the *Daiyi pian*, mentioned by Tadeo Wang to the friars:

If we examine the matter [of filial piety toward the parents], the firmest believers in the [Christian] teachings are members of the gentry and of officialdom, whose family ancestral temples at home (*jia zhong miaoyu* 家中廟宇) must be lavishly decorated and whose rituals must be the most august and in accordance with ancient practice. This should be a clear proof [that Christians respect parents]. If someone believes in some teachings, but then acts in accordance with other teachings, he has two minds; so how could it be possible to say that he is the firmest believer? People harbor these doubts [about us Christians] only because the rituals of sacrifice [to the ancestors that we perform] in our religion differ [from current vulgar practice]. Money and silver ingots made of paper, funerary implements, and grave clothes are all things that contemporaries consider important, but in fact they are useless, and we thus do not employ them. We only make offerings of fruits and edibles without eating them and then distribute them to poor relatives. Now, in the homes of commoners, images of gods and Buddhas are worshipped in home shrines (*jiatang*), where also the ancestral tablets are kept together all in one place. According to the Western Teachings, the Daoist Triad [i.e., the Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water] and the Sage-Emperors are not gods, and one should not offer sacrifices to the Five Sages—Wutong (Wusheng Wutong 五聖五通). Thus, we Christians have discarded sacrifices to nonspiritual entities; but the people in the world have

13. See Mish 1964, 11–12, with modifications. For a critique by the Franciscan Antonio Caballero of these offerings at the tombs allowed by the Jesuits, see Gernet 1985, 185.

slandered us, saying that we also do not pay reverence to the ancestors. The ignorant might [slander us] mistakenly, but there are those who know [the truth] clearly and intentionally lie about us.¹⁴

Yang's words confirm that both Christian elites and commoners commonly practiced ancestral reverence in their homes but eschewed "useless things" prized by contemporaries contrary to ancient usage, in particular paper money, funerary implements, and images of gods. Aleni went further than Ricci and even Yang in encouraging creative solutions, such as those invented by some Fujianese laymen for the further "purification" of Christian ancestral veneration. For example, a Christian in Quanzhou invented a new ritual sequence for funerals to "maintain the flavor of the [Christian] Way and the feeling of filial piety" as well. At the death of one of his parents, this fellow made a wooden cross with the name of the deceased on it, put it near the bier, and kowtowed to it. Food offerings, after being presented to the Lord of Heaven rather than to the ancestors, were then distributed for consumption to others present at the ceremony in order to obtain celestial merits. Similarly, another Christian commissioned a posthumous portrait of himself adoring a cross and commanded that only those of his descendants who converted could be added to the portrait, following the *zhaomu* order.¹⁵

Over time, other Jesuits developed slightly different attitudes toward ancestral reverence, but clearly in the late Ming they were trying to diminish the role of ancestral rituals in daily life. They never openly attacked such rituals and the symbols associated with them. Rather, they tolerated ancestral portraits and ancestral tablets, while teaching Christians that it was unacceptable for them to believe that the ancestors' souls inhabited the tablets and consumed the offerings. Some symbols of the ancestors were thus deemed allowable, but active participation in the usual rituals in their honor was forbidden. Casimiro Zhu 祝, an

14. See *Daiyi pian*, 2.2a–b, in *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian* 1965, 561–62. Yang here echoed the anti-Buddhist and anti-Daoist polemic by his Jesuit protégé Aleni, mentioned at the outset of this chapter. He also attacked the popular Jiangnan cult to the demonic god Wutong (also called "Five Sages"), on which see von Glahn 1991, 676, and 2004, chap. 6. Aleni, who lived in Yang's Hangzhou mansion for several years in the mid-1610s, certainly interacted with his patron on the topic of rites and witnessed elite rituals in Yang's home.

15. Both examples in *Kouduo richao*, 7.6b, in CCT ARSI, 7: 468 (Zürcher, trans., 2007, 532–33). According to Zürcher, the second Christian layman is Lucas Li, one of Ricci's first converts in Beijing.

early Qing Christian scholar from Lanqi (Zhejiang), tells us, for example, that *passive* participation in full-fledged ancestral rituals in the lineage hall (i.e., assisting without officiating as ritual masters) was accepted by the Jesuits.¹⁶

The Fuan Literati's Interpretations

Tadeo Wang's position exemplifies the consensus on the meaning of ancestral rites reached by Christian elites in the late Ming period. But, as the experiments that Aleni approved in Fujian show, possibilities for variation always existed and further broadened the array of local practices. The Fuan Christian literati advanced new elaborations on the Jesuit-approved rationale for the rites. Miao Shixiang, a prominent member of the lineage incriminated by the friars in Muyang, for example, affirmed the interpretation of the rites as remembrance and rejected the interpretation that they centered around requests for material favors from the ancestors:

Since the time of our two holy kings [Yao and Shun], it has been lawful to sacrifice to the ancestors. And since then, in these [ancestral] sacrifices, there is no trace of asking for favors and help, but there is only an offering of things to the deceased, and no reward is expected from the souls of the dead. On the contrary, this is done as a sign of honor and reverence that the sons owe their parents. *Since through the knowledge of one's fathers one reaches the knowledge of God; thus in antiquity the kings put the image of their first ancestor a bit lower than the position reserved to Shangdi (which means the King Above), in order to communicate the idea that from there comes the knowledge of God as the first principle that created one's ancestors and parents.*¹⁷ (Italics added)

Miao advanced the idea that ancestral images, since time immemorial, had been revered in a position close to that of the ancient supreme god Shangdi, identified by Ricci as the Christian God. To him, this legitimized the use of tablets for Christians. Joaquín Guo Bangyong pushed Miao's reasoning further and reinterpreted the basic Jesuit doctrine. Responding to the friars' question on what he knew "regarding

16. See Varo 1680, f. 121r. The Chinese name of Casimiro Zhu in romanization was "Chu Ting-y" (1615-?); see SF, 7.1: 214, letter of the Lanqi Christians to Gregorio Luo Wenzao, original in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 163, ff. 313-14.

17. The letter was first included in Spanish translation from a Chinese original, now lost, in "Primera informacion"; see copy in Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1073, f. 20v; another copy in APSR, *Ritos Chinos*, vol. 1, doc. 1, ff. 214r-v.

the common intention held by people in the kingdom of China while they make offerings and sacrifices to their ancestors at the tombs, temples and homes,” Guo replied:

The meaning of the prayers and invocations [used by] the ancients to pray and give offerings in the sacrificial rituals to the ancestors in most of China is the following: we recognize that the virtue and merits of the ancestors are sufficient to locate them adjoined to Heaven. Their spirits usually are located to the right and left sides of Shangdi. Thus, [although] it is true that there are invocations to pray to the ancestors so that they reward [humans] with corresponding favor for innumerable generations, [the fact is that] the ancestors are loved and esteemed by Shangdi, and therefore [He] looks at their merits and virtues and rewards with favor the sincere respect of their descendants, in order to repay them. It is exactly as in the West, where the Holy Mother, the angels, and the saints are asked to intercede [in front of Shangdi/God].¹⁸

This declaration partly reproduced the theological position of the China Jesuits, in particular Aleni's. But Guo, following Miao, went further in saying that the ancestors were indeed spiritual entities. They did not, however, fulfill the functions of God, or gods (the friars' "idols"), but rather those of the Catholic saints, who were intercessors at the heavenly court. Although the ancestors of the seventeenth-century Chinese converts died before Christianity reached China, according to Guo's interpretation they nevertheless must sit in Heaven at the side of Shangdi, as they had done since the beginning of human history. Three ideas are implicitly expressed here: first, that salvation outside the Church was possible for those ignorant of Christ's coming; second, that Shangdi, the Lord on High of the Chinese classics, corresponded to the Christian god; third, that the idea of the "communion of saints" (i.e., the mystical union of canonized saints, angels, souls in purgatory, and the faithful) could be applied to the ancestors as well. Such positions possibly also reflected more flexible explanations offered by missionaries in their oral instruction. For example, missionaries in China remained evasive on the topic of the salvation of the ancestors and of the ancient sages. In 1632 Aleni had skirted this very issue in conversations with the Zhangzhou Christian Ambrosius Yan Zanhua 嚴贊化, by concentrating on the celestial bliss of the saved rather than on the damnation of the unsaved. This variety of views on the fate of pre-Christian ances-

18. Chinese text in Caballero 1635–36, f. 86r; I collated it with the version in APSR, *Ritos Chinos*, f. 226v.

tors was due in part to the fact that theological opinions on the matter were changing well into the seventeenth century.¹⁹

In spite of the explanations given by the Jesuits and by the Fuan Christian lay leaders, or rather, precisely because of them, the friars remained unconvinced. They certainly harbored personal animosity toward the Jesuits, because of both individual clashes and corporate envy. But they also realized, through their own observations in the field, that most participants in the ancestral rituals did expect material rewards directly from their forebears, who were viewed as divine entities, and this certainly clashed with the friars' theological position on idolatry and superstition. Other "superstitious" practices they must have observed indicated a popular belief in a close link between the ancestors' well-being and family prosperity. Especially in Fujian, burials were often delayed for years in order for the family to buy the best plot of land and modify its geomantic energy as indicated by geomancers, so that the positive influence of satisfied ancestors, buried in the correct *fengshui* environment, would guarantee socioeconomic success for their descendants. Even if literati like the late Ming Fujianese Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567–1624) decried such excesses ("the delusion of geomancy runs

19. See Cummins 1993, 112–13; for the discussion with Yan, see Zürcher, trans., 2007, 327. The matter of salvation outside the Church became a debated topic after the discovery of the New World. The famous sixteenth-century Dominican theologians of the University of Salamanca (Spain), Francisco de Vitoria, Melchior Cano (1509–60), and Domingo De Soto (1494–1560), discussed the problem of the salvation of people who had not heard the Christian message. De Soto believed that "implicit" faith had been instilled by God into pagans before the conquest, and that such faith, coupled with a moral life, had probably saved them. The last important Dominican of the School of Salamanca who treated this problem was Pedro de Ledesma (1544–1616), who concluded that pagans would be damned for their sins but not for lack of knowledge of the Gospel. Thus a virtuous pagan could be saved. A number of Jesuit professors at the Roman College (such as Roberto Bellarmino and Juan De Lugo) went even further. De Lugo (1583–1660), for example, thought that even Muslims, Jews, and heretics, who had heard about the Gospel, could be saved, since they were "excused from the sin of infidelity by reason of invincible ignorance." This open attitude was shared by a good number of Jesuits in China, and even the China Dominican Riccio reflected this attitude in the 1660s in his discussion of Confucius's salvation (see RH, f. 69r). However, Augustinian rigorism started prevailing in the second half of the seventeenth century and affected the anti-Jesuit missionaries in China, such as the MEP missionaries and the Dominicans. On salvation outside the Church, see Capéran 1934; Coutant 1945; Collani 1989; Sullivan 1992; and Criveller 1997, 21–28; on Ledesma, see Martín Hernández 1991, 651.

deep in Fujian," he wrote), such practices continued unabated, proof of how common was the conviction of a close spiritual link between ancestors and descendants.²⁰

The friars' official complaints against the Jesuit policies inaugurated the notorious "Chinese Rites Controversy." Morales traveled to Rome and in 1645 obtained a Roman decision favorable to his position. Roman theologians based their verdict on the premise that Christian participants in ancestral rituals were in fact offering divine honors (*cultus*) to human beings, the ancestors, seen as divinities or endowed with divine attributes. In other words, the Chinese were committing the sin of idolatry. The decree of the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, backed by an opinion of the Holy Office, bluntly ordered:

In no way may Chinese Christians pretend outwardly to assist at sacrifices honoring ancestors. They may not join in prayers or in any superstitious heathen rites for them. Much less may they take any active part in such rites. . . . In no way are they allowed to keep tablets on a true and proper altar dedicated to their ancestors. Much less may they offer them prayers and sacrifices, even with a hidden and feigned intention.

The battle continued for decades. In response to the pro-friars decision of 1645, in 1656 the Jesuits petitioned and obtained a papal decision allowing the converts to keep the tablets and to be present at ancestral rituals "as long as they are not doing anything superstitious." In 1669 the Holy Office stated that both the 1645 and the 1656 decisions were valid. Rome would leave the matter to the conscience of missionaries in China, until debates with the Kangxi emperor in the 1690s and two failed papal legations in the early eighteenth century sealed the fate of the ancestral rites.²¹

The Dominicans' Reform of Filial Piety

The theological duels between the different parties in the Rites Controversy affected the Christians of Fujian, both in their ritual practices and in their Christian identity-building. The strict prohibitions im-

20. See quotations in Kutcher 1999, 23. Xie was in fact sympathetic to Christianity; see HCC, 477.

21. Quotations from Noll 1992, doc. 1, 2–3, doc. 2 (cf. Vareschi 1994), and doc. 4; for a discussion of controversies among missionaries over funerary practices in the seventeenth-century China mission, see Standaert 2008, 164–83.

posed by the friars on their flocks over the course of a century ultimately resulted in a patchwork of practices, continuously adjusted to balance the dictates of Roman orthodoxy with the reality of Chinese social life and customs. Fuan Christians were receptive to the reform of filial piety proposed by the Dominicans, but other Fujianese communities were more refractory, and their resistance reveals the limits of priestly power and the importance of the laity in shaping practice.

In response to the favorable interpretation of ancestral rituals, the friars used oral and written instruction to persuade Christians in Fujian to abandon the rites. Between the 1630s and the 1680s, first Juan Bautista de Morales and later his younger confrere Francisco Varo led the hard line against ancestral rituals. The Dominicans went even further than the 1645 Roman prohibitions. For them, there was no question that grand ceremonies at the ancestral halls were forbidden to Christians. But tablets at home should also be destroyed, something that Rome had not ordered. In fact, the Holy Office had even allowed posthumous portraits and tablets at funerals, as long as they were set on a common table and “the actions performed [were] within the bounds of civil and political compliance.” The Franciscan Augustin de San Pascual, who worked in Mindong in the period 1672–77, however, confirmed that the Dominicans tried to destroy the tablets whenever possible: “When I was in Fujian, since I was then still a novice in things Chinese, I followed what I saw that the Dominicans were doing. In those days I used to burn tablets.”²²

The Dominicans, nevertheless, could not enforce their policy with coercion. First, the prohibitions were communicated only to those who had asked to be baptized and never preached to “gentiles,” since the missionaries thought that there was “no need to announce [the prohibitions] to those who showed no interest in becoming Christians.” The friars did not approach gentiles or mention the topic openly in their published catechisms because of the still controversial nature of ancestral rituals. Besides, “scandalizing” recent converts might also have offered an opportunity to local notables or government officials to attack Christians as unfilial. On the internal front, the missionaries could only

22. See the Roman decision on funerary tablets in Noll 1992, doc. 1, 3–4; letter of San Pascual in SF, 7.1: 248. After years of experience in China, San Pascual decided that tablets were acceptable.

try peacefully to convince their converts of the religious necessity of abandoning ancestral rituals. They occasionally used denial of the sacraments as a disciplinary instrument against recalcitrant individuals, but the work of persuading the faithful was done mainly through oral instruction and the tightly controlled circulation of manuscripts. All manuscript texts on ancestral piety were composed from the 1650s to the 1680s, during a period of internal debates that involved not only the missionaries—mainly Jesuits and Dominicans—but also a limited circle of Chinese converts belonging to the communities of Fujian. In particular, some Fuan literati (*Fuan xiushi* 福安秀士) helped the Dominicans draft their Chinese works against the rites. On the opposite front, Paulus Yan Mo, son of Ambrosius Yan Zanhua from Zhangzhou, and Leontius Li Yifen 李奕芬, son of Aleni's prominent convert Thomas Li Jiugong from Fuqing, composed rebuttals of Varo's writings.²³

The extant Chinese-language Dominican documents consist of a Chinese translation of the 1645 Roman decisions by Juan Bautista de Morales; a short treatise on the meaning of "Catholic filial piety," also by Morales ("Explication of Catholic Filial Piety," 1650s?); and "A Critique of Sacrifice" (1650s–1660s?), a treatise on the meaning of sacrifice, authored by Francisco Varo with help from his Fuan Christians. These texts reveal the parameters of the discussion among missionaries and Christians and uncover the Dominican strategy to modify the Chinese interpretation of filial piety to fit Catholic orthodoxy.²⁴

According to contemporary sources, Morales's "Explication of Catholic Filial Piety" was first disseminated in the 1650s to Fuan Christians as an addendum to his Chinese version of the 1645 Roman decisions on the rites. It offered local Christians a rationale for the blunt, authoritarian papal prohibitions. On the matter of ancestral rituals, for example, the papal decree simply said "Christians shall not offer sacrifice to the ancestors" (*jiaozhong ren bu gai ji zuxian* 教中人不得祭祖先). In all likelihood, the essay reflected the oral instruction given to converts, especially those who wished to join the church. The Dominicans

23. Quotation from Varo 1671, as found in GH, 1: 4009. Varo's catechism, *Shengjiao mingzheng*, also had a section on the meaning of sacrifice (Varo 1903, 70–73), very similar to his earlier "[Fuan] bianji." However, the catechism makes no direct mention of the problem of ancestral rituals. On the debates in Fujian, see Staedert 1995, 11–12.

24. For bibliographical information on these texts, see Chapter 3, 112n.

tried to modify the understanding of filial piety in order to convince converts to shed ancestral rituals.²⁵

Morales's essay opens with an affirmation of the importance of filial piety among Catholics and in the Christian commandments: "The rituals of filial respect of our Teachings are not proclamations of empty niceties but an essential and true reality." He discussed the appropriate respectful behavior toward one's living parents, as well as piety toward the deceased. Both fall under the category of *li* 禮, ritual propriety. While one's parents are alive, filial piety is expressed not only in external things (*waiwu* 外物) but also, and mainly, in the inner will (*neizhi* 内志). Thus sons are to be respectful toward their parents and obey them. They have to pay special obeisances to them at the New Year, on their birthdays, and during family ceremonies such as cappings and weddings. These acts show gratitude for all the care that parents have showered on their children. Here, we sense no rift with the Confucian tradition.

25. Quotation from Morales 1650s?, f. 177r; cf. Filippucci 1683a, f. 9r. For a rather free translation of Morales's essay into Spanish, see José María González 1959; Chinese original in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Borgia Cinese* 503, ff. 184v–177r [sic]. Copies of the "Explication of Catholic Filial Piety" must have still been in circulation in Fujian in the 1680s, since it was then that the Jesuits discovered its existence and secretly obtained a copy. The Jesuits were interested in using Morales's treatise to attack the Dominican interpretation of the papal decree and to criticize Morales's translations and his understanding of the Chinese language. Filippucci 1700 (written in 1683), 44, states: "I [i.e., Filippucci] had some hint of [the treatise's] existence by chance in 1679, while I was in Canton. Having found out with certitude, but confusedly, about the matter, I thus immediately informed our Father Simão Rodrigues who was living in the city of Fuzhou of the province of Fujian about it, and asked him to make efforts to acquire an excerpted copy of the translation among the Christians under the care of the Dominicans, and to send it to me. He did so immediately and sent it to me through two routes with great diligence." Filippucci (1700, 116) dates the essay to the 1650s (I believe correctly so): "It seems that this work [i.e., "Shengjiao xiaoqin jie"] came to light after the return of Father [Morales] from Rome to China [in 1649], when he divulged among the neophytes a Chinese translation of the responses and of the Pontifical decree. . . . Such translation was disseminated as an enclosure of this booklet." The only extant copy of the "Shengjiao xiaoqin jie" in the Vatican Library indeed contains the decree as a sort of appendix (ff. 177v–r). The pontifical decree was addressed to the "Christians of the Great Ming," and Filippucci (1700, 43) observed that this is a clear indication that it was done between the arrival of Morales in 1649 and the end of the various Southern Ming regimes in Fujian in the 1650s. González (GH, 1: 401n10) believes that the essay was written in the late 1650s, before the 1661 Dominican missionary conference of Lanqi.

In the next section, however, Morales set the Christian law above filial piety:

[Parental] orders that go against principle (*li* 理) should not be obeyed. Those [sons] who follow [such orders] are sinful, and those who oppose them are meritorious. [Sons] should pray for their parents' longevity and admonish them to follow the moral way (*dao* 道) in order to enjoy the true blessings [of afterlife]. This is to be dutifully filial toward one's parents.

A warning is also leveled against those who lack respect for their parents:

The Lord will judge your filial piety, and you will receive retribution in life and death [for it]. If you infringe on the orders of the Lord, there will be no place to escape in this life or after death, and the Lord will severely punish you.

Interestingly, in the first statement, Morales invoked not Christian precepts but the concepts of "principle" (*li* 理) and of "moral way" (*dao* 道). The second statement, however, clarifies that such ideas, which could be understood as belonging to the Chinese conceptual repertoire, in fact coincide with the teachings of the Lord of Heaven. In the end, Morales implied that to be truly filial is to follow Chinese filial behavior only as long as it does not conflict with Christian moral and ritual rules, as he interpreted them. Divine punishment, in this and in the next life, is to be expected for those who do not follow the principle of this Christian filial piety.²⁶

The next section examines filial piety toward the deceased parents. Engaging in the ancestral rituals so common in China contradicts Christian filial piety: "It is forbidden to sacrifice and make offerings to the deceased, since rituals of sacrifice can be directed only to the Lord of Heaven." The paragon offered to Chinese Christians is the practice in Western countries (*xiguo* 西國), where nobody offers sacrifice to the angels or the Holy Mother, since they are not the creators of the world. Similarly, no sacrifice should be offered to the ancestors. The ancestors, Morales argued, have no power to respond to prayers and to bestow benefits on, or avert misfortune from, their descendants. They are creatures, not divinities. Their souls are therefore either in paradise or hell and cannot descend on the offerings and into the ancestral tablets. The Lord of Heaven is the only divine entity capable of fulfilling human requests. Morales uses a quotation from the "Classic of Rituals" (*Lijing* 禮

26. Quotations from Morales 165os?, ff. 184 v, 183v-r [sic].

經, i.e., *Liji* 禮記) to illustrate the nature of the relationship with the Christian god: "Sacrifice entails prayer, feelings of gratitude, and supplications [to avoid misfortune]." These three dimensions of prayers present in sacrifice (requests for benefits, offerings of grace, and supplications to avoid misfortune) can be expressed only by "Christian sacrifice" (i.e., the Mass) and by prayers to the Lord not to the ancestors.²⁷

The reasons for rejecting ancestral rituals are several. Morales observed that many in China perform ancestral rituals, as a matter of fact, from impure motivations that have nothing to do with respect for, or with the desire to benefit, the souls of the ancestors. For example, some engage in ancestral rituals to display their filial piety or their wealth and thereby acquire prestige. Some do it to receive ritual offerings from others, in order to benefit their own relatives and friends or to feed their retainers. Some do it to use the proceedings from sacrificial fields inherited from the ancestors, which otherwise could not be used. Finally, others do it to entertain their guests at lavish banquets. Here Morales was criticizing the political and social dimensions of lineage ancestral rituals.²⁸

He then suggested an alternative way to honor the deceased. A Christian who truly desires the well-being of the deceased ancestors should erect an altar to the Lord of Heaven and ask the Lord to benefit the souls of the dead. The priest can recite prayers to God for the souls of the ancestors during the celebration of the mass on that altar. The faithful can engage in alms-giving, abstinence, fasting, penances, and mortification, all of which are ways to earn merits for the deceased. "Among Christians," Morales added:

some offer things in sacrifice, and after the sacrifice they distribute them to the poor. By this they mean that they ask the Lord of Heaven to save the dead from the pains of purgatory and grant to their souls [the privilege] to ascend earlier to Heaven and enjoy its blessings. However, all these rituals of sacrifice should be directed only to the Lord of Heaven, not to human beings.

This is the classic devotion associated in Europe with purgatory: relatives and friends of the deceased perform meritorious actions in "suffrage" of the deceased, such as alms-giving, prayers, fasts, the offering of masses, and the earning of indulgences. These suffrages have the power

27. Ibid., ff. 183r–182v [sic]; quotation from *Liji*, *juan* 11 (Ruan 1980, 508): 祭有祈焉, 有報焉, 有由辟焉.

28. See Morales 1650s?, f. 182v.

to redeem part or all of the temporary purgatorial punishments inflicted on the soul for sins committed during life.²⁹

Morales presented these teachings to Fuan Christians as an explication of the papal prohibitions based on both Chinese conceptions of filial piety and the Christian prioritizing of God over any other spiritual entity. His short document, consisting of a few folios, offered not elaborate theological explanations but a simple compass for the ordinary Christian, who could copy the text and circulate it among fellow Christians. A more sophisticated approach was needed for the literati who had received training both in the Confucian classics and in Christian doctrine. Francisco Varo's "Critique of Sacrifice," a text based on the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, expounded in detail the meaning of sacrifice and idolatry. Varo also used quotations from the Confucian classics to further prove his points in a Chinese framework. The treatise opens with a discussion of the failure to properly revere God, either by using false rituals to honor the true god or by using genuine rituals to honor a false god (these are classic Thomistic descriptions of superstitious rituals). Varo categorized Buddhists and Daoists as using genuine rituals to honor a false god and offered the experience of the ancient Hebrews as an analogy. The ancient Hebrews made images of their forefathers and then worshipped them using the rituals initially reserved only to the Lord of Heaven. Similarly, Buddhists and Daoists used rituals to worship people as gods rather than to worship the Lord of Heaven, behavior Varo saw as "an enticement of the devil" (*xiemo suo yin* 邪魔所引).

The Catholic conception and practice of sacrifice were used as the measure of proper worship. Varo suggested that only the highest form of sacrifice (*jisi* 祭祀, which he does not define) could be considered worthy of the Lord of Heaven. This form of sacrifice should never be

29. Quotations from *ibid.*, ff. 180v and 178r. Chinese Daoist and Buddhist rituals earning spiritual merits (*gongde* 功德) for the souls of the deceased had similar functions. On Catholic purgatory, see Le Goff 1984, 294; and Aries 1981, 465. CE, vol. 12, "Purgatory," offers this definition of the doctrine: "The Catholic doctrine of purgatory supposes the fact that some die with smaller faults for which there was no true repentance, and also the fact that the temporal penalty due to sin is at times not wholly paid in this life. The Council of Trent (Sess. XXV, 'De Purgatorio') asserted the existence of purgatory, and affirmed 'that the souls therein detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful and principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.'"

directed to other entities, such as the ancestors. Obviously, for a Catholic, the ultimate form of “sacrifice” was the mass, a ritual in which God himself is immolated.³⁰ Varo wrote:

Sacrifice can be directed only to the Lord. However, people have a wrong idea of the true origin of good and evil, and therefore they sacrifice to heaven, the earth, the mountains, the rivers, the spirits, the ancient sages, and the ancestors, in the hope that they will bestow fortune and keep away misfortune. Such being the case, then [people] ask this from [entities that are] not their true lord and pay homage to [entities that] have not bestowed grace on them [as the Lord does]. This is like asking medicine from someone who is not a doctor. Isn't this utmost confusion?

Varo also referred to the ranking of rituals (*li* 禮) adopted in China and, using a Chinese framework, argued that the rites to the Lord of Heaven differed from those to the earthly overlords and the people in authority:

If the most respected position is not honored by the most exalted ritual, then the order between high and low is lost. . . . Therefore the ritual (*li* 禮) honoring the Lord of Heaven is not the ritual of respect for the king, and the ritual to the king is not the ritual employed for masters, elders, relatives, and friends. All rituals are being performed in a certain way because of the [difference] between exalted and humble and thus must be descending [in degree]. The Holy Teachings forbid sacrifice (*jisi* 祭祀) to a false lord on the basis of the necessary nature of the order of the Five Relationships and of the Five Rituals. . . . Thus, although the Holy Teachings respect the exalted position of the Holy Mother, the powers of the angels, and the virtue of the saints, nevertheless the Teachings do not have rituals [to honor them], and this is precisely the reason for it.³¹

Rituals were not only ranked according to social hierarchy but also marked by their object of veneration. Varo here touched on belief in the ancestors' power of intercession, which the Dominicans had found objectionable in Jesuit Christian communities ever since their arrival in Fujian in the early 1630s. Varo's cautionary statement that Catholicism respects the Virgin Mary, the angels, and the saints but does not include rituals to honor them seems to be a direct response to the arguments of Christian literati like Guo Bangyong.

30. For a concise analysis of the Chinese and Western terminology for sacrifice, see Zito 1997, 228n2.

31. See both passages in CCT ARSI, 10: 380, 385, respectively.

To understand the Dominican strategy behind a tract like “A Critique of Sacrifice,” compiled for a Chinese readership, a look at another, later work representing the summation of Varo’s understanding of Chinese rituals is illuminating. In the 1680s, at the end of his life, Varo composed an extensive Spanish-language treatise on the meaning of ancestral rituals and the rites to Confucius, entitled “A Treatise in which are contained the foundations upon which the Dominicans have prohibited to their Christians certain ceremonies that the gentiles perform in veneration of their master Confucius and their deceased ancestors.”³² This massive manuscript, never published in its entirety, was written for a select readership of fellow missionaries and members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in China, Manila, and Europe. It illustrates the climate of theological debate that characterized the 1680s in China, especially in Fujian. In the introduction to the “Treatise,” Varo explained in clear terms his approach to the problem and implicitly revealed the friars’ thinking:

The foundation of our understanding of these matters is reduced to three points. First and most important, [our understanding is based on] the authorities [contained in] the classical books that are current in the entire kingdom, and [on] the interpretation of the most influential doctors of our times, and of the classical commentators. Second, [our understanding is based on] what we have seen and experienced in the places where we have been. Third, [our understanding is based on] what we have heard from the Christians as well as the gentiles regarding the aforementioned matters. When these two latter [i.e., what we have seen and heard] are in accordance with the first [the Chinese classics and commentaries], it cannot be claimed that we have seen and heard such things only in a specific place.³³

For Varo and his confreres, textual authority came first, a view they shared with their Confucian counterparts. Textual authority could be

32. The Spanish title is “Tratado en que se ponen los fundamentos que los Religiosos Predicadores tienen para prohibir a sus cristianos algunas ceremonias que los gentiles hacen en veneración de su maestro Confucio y de sus progenitores difuntos.” Varo started working on the treatise in 1669 and completed it only in 1680. In 1685, he had two copies of the “Treatise” made: one for the Dominican archives in Manila, and one for the new vicar apostolic of Fujian, Charles Maigrot, MEP. Varo’s original copy was eventually brought to Rome, where it is today preserved in the Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1070. It consists of 153 recto-verso folios of minute writing, with Chinese quotations and citations. This is the copy I have used. A much abridged published Italian translation is Varo 1700.

33. Varo 1680, f. 2v.

corroborated, but not replaced, by the missionary gaze and the oral opinion of Chinese Christians and “gentiles.” The first part of the treatise offers an explanation of concepts that figured prominently in the debates on the Chinese rites and critiques the Jesuit understanding of those concepts: *ji* 祭 and *si* 祀 (sacrifice), *fu* 福 (blessings), *miao* 廟 (temple), *citang* 祠堂 (ancestral hall), and *shen* 神 (spirits/gods). All these terms pertain to ancestral rituals, and their translation into Catholic theological terminology, using as guidance Chinese dictionaries, classical texts, commentaries, and experience, can either transform the ancestral rites into “religious” (the Dominican position) or “civil-political” (the Jesuit position) phenomena. Various sections of the manuscript concentrate on a particular concept, the way that concept has been explained by Jesuit commentators using the Classics (especially the *Liji*), and how Varo’s critique, complete with his own interpretation, comes closer to the original meaning of the Chinese. The final portion of the treatise looks at funerals and ancestral cults, their origins, ritual practices, the shapes and meanings attributed to offerings and tablets, and the meaning of some concepts attached to ritual objects, such as the term *ling* 靈 (soul) found in words like *lingyi* 靈衣 (funerary clothing) or *lingche* 靈車 (funerary bier). Again, Varo’s focus is on the religious dimension of these rituals and one of his general rules is adherence to the Chinese texts:

We Europeans, when translating the Chinese authoritative texts, should not behave like commentators, since we have no authority whatsoever, and unlike them we have not passed the literary examinations. Rather, we have merely to limit ourselves to translate faithfully the Chinese language . . . and if by chance one or two words must be added for clarity, they should be put in parentheses, or identified as additions, and not as part of the text.³⁴

Whether this approach truly produced a better understanding of the texts or, as the Jesuits and some Christian literati accused, simply elaborated on quotations translated literally and considered out of context is an open question. Varo’s approach was harshly criticized by Yan Mo, for example, who exclaimed after reading the friar’s Chinese writings:

[Varo] does not base his argument on the original meaning of the word “sacrifice,” nor has he made a study of the forms of invocation (*zhuwen* 祝文) written throughout the centuries. He has only picked out one or two ambiguous phrases

34. Ibid., f. 13r.

from the Classics, knowing nothing of the original meaning and not trying to arrive at an intelligent understanding of its context but simply weaving together what he finds into a plot. For him the thing seems to be too easy!

From the point of view of a Confucian scholar, this critique was unsailable. In the final analysis, however, theologians in Europe, rather than Chinese Christians and missionaries, were to pass judgment on these matters. Chinese ideas as interpreted in Europe eventually dictated the theologians' negative verdict in the eighteenth century. In fact, ideal prescriptions imposed from above rarely matched real practice on the ground.³⁵

Ancestral Rituals and Fujianese Christian Communities

In their letters and reports, the Dominicans always proclaimed the "purity" of their communities from idolatry and ancestral rituals. The presence or absence of the ancestral altar and the tablets and the production or abandonment of ritual offerings at funerals indicated for the Dominicans a Chinese Christian's level of commitment. But daily practice presented continuous challenges. The theological explanations and the modified ritual sequences offered by Morales and Varo in their writings elicited a range of responses from Fujianese converts, from acceptance to defiance, and church practices changed over time, following not only the vagaries of ecclesiastical politics but, most important, the reactions of local Christians.

In Fujian, two factors further complicated the situation. First, the papacy, through the creation of new missionary territories headed by vicars apostolic under the direction of the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, tried to impose its control on the missionaries of China, who up to the 1630s had been acting independently, under the patronage of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns. Second, a new group of missionaries, the members of the Mission Étrangères de Paris (MEP), arrived in Fujian. The two events, in fact, were tightly connected. The first member of the MEP to reach China, François Pallu, was also Rome's first vicar apostolic with episcopal powers in China. He settled in Fujian, and before his death in the care of the Dominicans in Muyang in 1684, Pallu

35. Passage translated in Albert Chan 2002, 52; original in CCT ARSI, 11: 45–46, 58–59. On Yan Mo's replies to Varo, see also Standaert 1995, 11–21.

nominated two new vicars apostolic, one each for northern and southern China. His Fuzhou-based companion, Charles Maigrot (1652–1730), MEP, was chosen as the new vicar apostolic for all of south China, although he exercised a shaky authority only over Fujian. Maigrot spent years trying to dominate recalcitrant missionaries while concurrently aiming to clarify and settle the controversies over rituals that had divided them for decades. Maigrot studied the writings of previous missionaries, especially those of Francisco Varo, and researched the Chinese classics with the help of two Fujianese Christian literati, who included Leontius Li Yifen. But the jurisdictional struggles in his vicariate embittered Maigrot, and his uncompromising attitudes and theological background (influenced by French Jansenism) hardened his stance against Chinese customs. In 1693 he issued a “Mandate” that forbade a host of practices previously tolerated by most missionaries.³⁶

In Maigrot’s “Mandate,” however, the question of domestic ancestral rituals remained open to different solutions and eventually became a contentious issue in the communities administered by the Dominicans, especially in the region of Zhangzhou. The 1645 papal decree prohibited ancestral rituals in the ancestral halls (“temples”) and prayers and offerings in front of tablets on domestic altars. It did not, however, explicitly order the *destruction* of the tablets; they simply should not be revered on domestic altars, which themselves were to be dismantled. The

36. Up to the arrival of Pallu, the China mission had always been simply part of the Jesuit province of Japan, mostly as a vice province. The authority of the bishop of Macau and of the archbishop of Goa (India), both appointed by Portugal, was limited to Macau. In 1658 the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, however, instituted special missionary territories (vicariates apostolic) in East Asia, headed by vicars apostolic with the ranks of bishops and delegated powers; on the jurisdictional struggles between Portugal and the papacy over the vicariates apostolic of China, see Margiotti 1958, 195–99. Jansenism was a movement named after its initiator, Cornelius Jansen (1585–1636), bishop of Ypres in Flanders. Theologically inspired by the writings of St. Augustin of Hippo, the movement had a pessimistic vision of human nature. Predestination was accepted in an extreme form, but, unlike Protestants, Jansenists held the necessity of the Roman Catholic Church for salvation and opposed justification by faith alone. Due to its theory of predestination, its discouragement of frequent communion, and its attack on the Jesuits and their system of moral casuistry (deemed excessively lax), Jansenism was finally condemned by Rome. This theological movement became particularly popular among the French clergy in the early eighteenth century. For a recent concise treatment of Jansenism, see Doyle 2000.

Dominicans always tried, however, to interpret the 1645 decree in a restrictive way and engaged in the smashing of domestic tablets. Nevertheless, by 1693, Vicar Apostolic Maigrot, although commending the Dominican policy of eradication of tablets, temporarily accepted “purified” tablets:

We have great praise for missionaries, who, in places where they are working for the Gospel, have tried to abolish the use of tablets set up in private houses in honor of the dead. We urge them to keep going in that direction. But, where it will be too difficult to do away with this practice, let there at least be this compromise: removing the words *shenzhu* (神主), *shenwei* (神位), *lingwei* (靈位), only the name of the deceased person should be written on the tablet, or at most the word (*wei* 位) can be added. Until the Apostolic See passes judgment on these matters, we do not entirely disapprove a tablet of this sort in the form specified above. But we do not want it understood superstitiously. Therefore, in places where tablets are set up in private homes, there should be a statement written in bold characters setting forth what Christians believe about the dead, and what the devotion of children and grandchildren toward their ancestors ought to be. We have submitted a model for this statement at the end of this Mandate; we are not opposed to another statement of similar meaning as long as it has our prior approval.³⁷

The diversity of practices allowed by Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans was behind Maigrot’s pragmatic approach to tablets. Such practices had emerged between the 1650s and the 1690s, when both the Jesuit and the Dominican positions were still viable and were legitimized by the ambiguous Roman decision of 1669 to leave the matter to the conscience of missionaries. Unsurprisingly, confusion among missionaries and Christians in Fujian characterized the years following the issuance of the “Mandate.” It is unclear what the consequences of this “Mandate” were in Mindong. In any case, by 1691 the Dominicans Manuel Trigueros and Magino Ventallol had composed a treatise, co-signed by Maigrot in Fuzhou, stating their firm position against the Chinese rites. Apparently, the Dominicans’ policy did not change with regard to ancestral rituals in Mindong.³⁸

37. Noll 1992, doc. 6, 9–10; cf. Collani 1994, 153.

38. The 1669 decree can be found in Noll 1992, doc. no. 4, 7. In a missionary conference held in Lanqi (Jinhua prefecture, Zhejiang) in 1661, eight Dominicans then present in China reaffirmed the rule that all catechumens, before receiving baptism, had to renounce all sacrifices not directed to the Christian god, including

In spite of these stern pronouncements on paper, however, the ritual life of Dominican communities in Fujian continued to exemplify the ambiguity within the church leadership. The Christian community of Houban village (near Zhangzhou, in Minnan), for example, had been administered by the Jesuits in the late Ming period, but in the late seventeenth century was reassigned by the vicars apostolic to the Dominicans. In matters of ancestral rituals, this community, dating to Aleni's times in the 1630s, followed the practices recommended by the Jesuits. The treatise by the local Christian leader Paulus Yan Mo, polemically entitled "Discerning Sacrifices" ("Bianji" 辨祭, 1680s), against Varo's "A Critique of Sacrifice" ("Bianji" 辯祭), for instance, defended the performance of ancestral rituals among Catholics. Yan challenged Varo's use of classical quotations and tried to nuance ("discern") the layering within the vast array of sacrificial practices in Chinese tradition. Similarly, "An Impeachment of 'A Critique of Sacrifice'" ("Bianji canping," 辯祭參評), coauthored by Leontius Li Yifen and the Jesuit Simão Rodrigues in Fuzhou, systematically attacked Varo's line of thinking.³⁹

those to Confucius and to the ancestors. This was their response to the permissions of ancestral rituals obtained by the Jesuit Martini in 1656; see GH, 1: 399–401. The declaration by Trigueros and Ventallol, entitled "Authenticum Instrumentum declarationis factae a RR. Patribus Emanuele Trigueros et Magino Ventallol . . .," was written in response to the treatise published in Paris in 1687 by the Jesuit Le Tellier, *Defense des nouveaux chrétiens et des missionnaires de la Chine*. That treatise had stated that the Dominicans in China had finally accepted the position of the Jesuits on the Chinese rites, prompting the Dominican rebuttal; see GH, 1: 587–89. On Maigrot in Fujian, see Collani 1994.

39. Two different versions of both Yan Mo's "Discerning Sacrifices" ("Bianji") and "An Impeachment of 'A Critique of Sacrifice'" ("Bianji canping") are available in CCT ARSL, 11: 37–59, and 10: 363–437, respectively. The Jesuit presence in Fujian decreased dramatically after the Manchu conquest, and by the early eighteenth century they only had three residences in the province (Standaert 1995, 11). After the conquest, no Jesuit was permanently stationed in Zhangzhou, except for a brief stint by Domenico Gabiani in 1664. The prominent literatus Ambrosius Yan Zanhua, patriarch of the local Catholic Yan family, following suggestions by Jesuits in China, unsuccessfully petitioned the Philippine Jesuits to send new priests in 1651. In 1676 the local Christians were still without priests, so much so that a delegation of five Christians led by Yan Zanhua met that year in Xiamen with four newly arrived friars (Piñuela OFM, San Pascual OFM, Luján OP, and del Rosario OP) asking that one of them become their "parish priest." Obviously, these Christians would do without a Jesuit, as long as they could secure a minimal religious service from a friar. The Dominicans finally established some residences in the Zhangzhou region in the early 1680s, thus ensuring such religious services, and practically

There were dissenting voices even among Dominicans. The Fuan native Gregorio Luo Wenzao, for example, adhered to the Jesuit line, being perhaps under the influence of Yan Mo's writings. When Luo was in charge of the Zhangzhou region, he tolerated the tablets, as he did in his mission of Luoyuan in Mindong. Moreover, while in Zhangzhou in 1681, he authored a Chinese-language treatise, trying to straddle the Jesuit and the Dominican positions. Luo offered an exploration of terminology, starting with the character *ji* for sacrifice. Following the line of thinking pursued by Yan Mo, Luo "discerned" the various layers of meaning in the concept of *ji*. He argued that different forms of veneration fell under the catchall category of "sacrifice" and simple ceremonies of respect to the king or the tutelary spirits protecting the cities and the country (i.e., civil ceremonies) had to be distinguished from *true sacrifice* (*verum sacrificium*), which in antiquity had been offered to Shangdi (Lord-on-High) alone. As a matter of fact, Luo argued, according to the Classics and to the most authoritative dictionaries, *ji* simply meant *pertingere seu pervenire*, that is, "to extend or to reach" toward the world of the deceased. It was thus a neutral term that needed to be dissected and explained. The "naïve theory of language" of Varo and his followers, as Paul Rule calls it, was here exposed: *ji* was not simply "sacrifice." The discussion continued with an examination of other terms, such as *miao* (*aula*, "hall," rather than "temple"). Luo concluded by making a crucial distinction concerning different understandings of the ancestral rites in China itself in different social groups:

I distinguish among three kinds of people: the first group is that of the eminent literati; the second group is that of the literati of lower level and of honored and prudent men; the third is that of the plebeians and the peasants. I say that in the first group of literati, some follow the [ritual] books and the ancient institutions and customs and are not falling into error regarding the oblation *ji* and the tablets of the deceased ancestors. But already for a thousand years now, a time when some of the commentators started to give a wrong interpretation of these matters, others have been following and believing in the errors I men-

taking over this region once ministered by the Jesuits. A Spanish version of the 1651 letter of Yan Zanhua to the Manila Jesuits is preserved in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 161-II, f. 368r; on the 1676 Xiamen meeting, see SF, 7.2: 1124. On Houban and the Zhangzhou mission, see Dehergne 1961, 330, 332.

tioned. This [split occurs] also in the second group. But in the third group, almost all believe [in these errors].⁴⁰

The “errors” are the beliefs that the soul of the ancestor descends into the tablet during *ji* in order to consume the food offerings and that the ancestors have the power to bestow favors on or to cause harm to their descendants. Luo, in other words, recognized that segments of the literate elites were aware of the “true” civil-political nature of the Chinese rites and of “sacrifices.” “Plebeians,” and even large chunks of the lower elites, on the other hand, were mired in idolatrous attitudes toward their ancestors and Confucius. But this should not preclude Christians, if appropriately instructed, from rejecting erroneous views and embracing the purist view of rituals and sacrifice.⁴¹

Maigrot’s issuance of the rigorist 1693 “Mandate,” however, froze any further discussions in Fujian. Yan Mo continued to defend, in writing, his pro-rites position even after 1693, but in 1695 he and his community were reprimanded by the Dominican Magino Ventallol, their new “parish priest,” for their stance and deprived of the sacraments. Finally, Ventallol, basing his thinking on previous theological opinions by fellow Dominicans, on Maigrot’s permission to keep purified tablets at home, and on two 1704 and 1715 papal decisions on the rites, including some special permissions, allowed the southern Fujianese to modify and keep the tablets in a Christian fashion. Such tablets were to be placed on a regular table, not on a special altar, and would not contain the characters forbidden in Maigrot’s 1693 “Mandate.” Christian definitions of their meaning would be pasted near the tablets. As the Fuan native Dominican Juan Feng Shiming wrote much later, in 1750, the permissions of Bishop Ventallol had by that date spread from Zhangzhou to Fuan:

40. For this translation, I used a transcript by Miguel Angel San Roman OP (whom I thank here) of the copy preserved in APF, *Indie Orientali* 1681–1684, vol. 3, ff. 74–84; cf. Rule 1986, 114. On the 1681 Chinese treatise on rites, translated into Spanish by the Philippine Jesuits during Luo’s stay in Manila (May 1683–July 1684), see SF, 7.1: 317n13, including a list of extant copies. A “corrected” and improved Latin version of the Chinese 1681 treatise was completed in 1686 by Luo’s secretary, Leonardo Nicolai da Leonissa OFM (Min. Conv.), and was sent to Propaganda Fide.

41. On the practice of Luo Wenzao, see testimonial by Augustin de San Pascual OFM, in SF, 7.1: 296–97, 317. San Pascual temporarily cared in 1676 for some Christian households usually administered by Luo Wenzao, and there he saw tablets adorned with flowers and incense holders.

In many of their private houses, Christians in Zhangzhou and Fuan have kept ancestral tablets. They are quite different from those of non-Christians, since they do not bear the inscription found in the latter: “throne or seat of the spirit of the ancestors” (*thronum seu sedes spiritus progenitorum* [= *lingwei* or *shenwei*]). These tablets were allowed to the Christians of Zhangzhou at the time of Bishop Magino [Ventallol].⁴²

The presence of the tablets in the 1750s, however, had rather different meanings in Zhangzhou and Fuan. This difference would eventually lead to two opposite outcomes: the elimination of tablets in Fuan, and their acceptance in Zhangzhou. In Zhangzhou, the Jesuits had never destroyed tablets, and by the time the Dominicans took over the southern Fujianese communities, Maigrot’s “Mandate” already allowed tablets. Thus, as Juan Feng Shiming acknowledged, it was rather difficult to ask local Christians to destroy them:

[The tablets in Zhangzhou], according to the custom and usage of this town, are difficult to destroy after they have been corrected. If they are taken away, the non-Christian relatives will rise against [the Christians]. They keep them at home only to avoid the threats of the officials and their relatives, not because they have any belief [in them] or want to hold other ceremonies that are celebrated by the gentiles. Moreover, the tablets of the Christians are very different from those of the non-Christians.⁴³

In Zhangzhou, moreover, Christians may have occasionally been asked to host the ancestral rituals of their lineage, and this additional responsibility compelled converts to keep the tablets at home:

42. For information on these events, see Albert Chan 2002, 64; *SF*, 7.1: 308, 317; and Noll 1992, *passim*. A letter of Juan Feng Shiming (Fuzhou, Feb. 27, 1753) in *GH*, 2: 459–60n37, mentions: “In this town of Zhangzhou there are only the tablets as tolerated and corrected by Mgr. Magino [Ventallol] and revised by Mgr. Sanz, who let [the Christians] have [such tablets] when [they] wrote to him about them.” After Maigrot was expelled by the Kangxi emperor in 1708 for his role in the ill-fated Tournon papal mission, Ventallol was named by Tournon as administrator of the vicariate apostolic of Fujian, a position he held until 1732; in 1732 Sanz succeeded him as the new vicar apostolic; see Dehergne 1961, 330. The modified tablets are discussed in a letter by Juan Feng Shiming to his provincial, Fuzhou, November 17, 1750, in *GH*, 2: 457n31. Feng also sent a facsimile of such tablets to Manila, where it is still preserved in APSR; see *GH*, 2: 458n35.

43. *GH*, 2: 459–60n37, letter of Juan Feng Shiming, Fuzhou, February 27, 1753; cf. also letter of November 17, 1750 cited in preceding note.

Besides these private [tablets] there are other ones that are held in common between Christians and gentiles who are descendants of the same root [i.e., belong to the same lineage]. They bear the inscription “throne or seat of the spirit of the ancestors.” [Christians and gentiles] also have common properties that were left by the ancestors to their sons and grandsons. Every year in rotation [lineage members] bring the tablets to their homes and perform a solemn ceremony on the day of the ancestors’ birthday. If a gentile does the ceremony, Christians do not attend or eat at the banquet. However, if it is the turn of the Christian, he will have to go to the house of the gentile to get the tablets. When [the Christian] celebrates the ceremony, all the non-Christian relatives come to participate and adore the tablet and eat at the table of the Christian. It is intended that the person who hosts the tablets and celebrates the ceremony will receive [proceeds] from the common property. But if he refuses, he will not only lose his part of the common property but will also be expelled from the village by his non-Christian relatives. This is the case of the tablets in Zhangzhou.⁴⁴

The lineages described by Feng were apparently not powerful or rich, did not have a free-standing ancestral hall, and rotated the sacrifice in their home shrines (*jiatang*). This testimony clarifies that Christians did not participate in rituals if possible. But when selected by rotation, they had to comply. Economic incentives (the proceeds from the ancestral fields) could have been a good reason for Christians to host the rituals, but peer pressure was the decisive factor. In the Zhangzhou region, Christians were a small group, around 700 in 1735; they enjoyed no strength in numbers to deflect the requests of their relatives.

The experience of a native priest from Longxi, near Zhangzhou, Pablo Cai Wenan 蔡文安 (1720–82), confirms toleration of tablets in Zhangzhou. When Cai returned home in 1751 after many years of study in the Chinese College of Naples (Italy), he was concerned that many Christians were still keeping “superstitious” tablets at home. He had many destroyed and proposed a new form of “corrected” tablets, bearing Christian symbols on them (i.e., a cross and the heart of Jesus) and the following inscription:

When humans die, their body and soul are separated, and they then receive the judgment of the Lord of Heaven. The virtuous ascend to paradise, while the evildoers descend to hell to suffer eternal pain. The virtuous who have yet to

44. GH, 2: 457n31, letter of Fr. Juan Feng Shiming to provincial, Fuzhou, November 17, 1750. Zheng (2001) does not mention this type of rotating sacrifice in Fujian.

atone for their sins and transgressions have to go to purgatory, but neither virtuous or evil people will ever return to the world. Things being so, those who are in purgatory to atone for their sins cannot avoid it. But their descendants can pray morning and evening in loving remembrance of their parents' memory, asking the ever-merciful Lord of Heaven to grant them an indulgence for the remaining burden of purgatory, so that they can speedily be granted ascent to the place of heavenly peace. To inscribe their name here on the left is only to this purpose, and there is no other meaning or any heterodox theory behind it.⁴⁵

Here we see the importance attached to intention in praying in front of the tablet and to indulgences for the parental souls. Cai's initiative, however, had little success and was eventually censored by Rome. For years, local Christians continued a passive resistance to the iconoclastic fervor of the Dominicans and were especially obdurate in places where corrected tablets had been allowed. When in early 1757 the new Dominican vicar apostolic of Fujian, Francisco Pallás, reached the province, for example, he found that Christians in Fuzhou still kept many corrected and uncorrected tablets. He ordered all of them burned, and he instructed his missionaries to refuse the sacraments even to converts who had not discarded the corrected ones. Resistance was such that Christians preferred to go without the sacraments rather than destroy the tablets previously approved, which contained only the name of the deceased and the date of death.⁴⁶

Pallás's rigor was so extreme that he was criticized by other Dominicans and reprimanded by Rome. In Fuan, however, he found support, since most missionaries had for decades been trying to eradicate the tablets. Although in the 1670s families in Luoyuan and several mountain villages were reported to still have them, tablets in the Christian households of Fuan and the surrounding villages were by then rather rare. In

45. The Chinese text can be found in APF, *SC Indie Orientali e Cina*, vol. 27, 1751–53, f. 721. I reproduce it here since it has never been published: 人死形靈相離, 即時聽受天主審判, 善者升天堂以享永福, 惡者下地獄而受永苦。善者未贖本罪愆垢, 不免煉獄, 或善或惡再無迴世之理。既然如是其在煉獄以贖罪過愆垢者無計可脫。乃子孫以愛念父母之心, 宜朝夕懇祈無限仁慈天主為其靈魂赦免煉獄餘責, 速賜升天安所。故記其名于左惟此而已, 實無他意並無異論也。

46. For biographical details on Cai, see Menegon 2006b. On Cai's initiative, see Krahl 1964, 163. For the reaction of Pallás, see his letter to the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, Fuan, September 4, 1760, as quoted in Krahl 1964, 164.

1710, for example, the Mindong-based González de San Pedro commented that

in those southern provinces, where we [Dominicans] have our communities, people are rebellious and disobedient . . . and are very stubborn in their rites and ceremonies to Confucius and their ancestors. Thus no pagan peasant or poor person lacks the ancestral tablets in his home. However, it is a well-known fact that to be Christian it is necessary to abandon these ceremonies, rites, and tablets. Therefore, when [Chinese people] ask for baptism, they are already aware that they have to abandon all those things. In fact, in many places the gentiles themselves would be scandalized if they saw a Christian keeping his tablets, and they would think that he has apostatized from the Law of Christ.⁴⁷

Only after the anti-Christian campaign of 1746 did tablets reappear for a time in Fuan's Christian homes. Local authorities requested the installation of domestic ancestral altars to prove that families had renounced Christianity. Fearful of repression, many Christians complied, something Juan Feng Shiming discovered when he visited Fuan homes in 1750 and found corrected tablets. But most local Christians had no strong attachment to them, and many were eliminated in 1751, when Feng exhorted Christians to destroy them. Only the families of degree-holders and rich farmers kept them for some time, fearing the loss of their degrees or their properties. With the relaxation of official pressure in the following years, however, the elimination of tablets became easier again. In 1753 Feng reported that all the tablets in the Christian homes of Fuzhou and Fuan had been destroyed. Diego Teradillos thus observed in 1756 that "here [in the region of Fuan] we [Christians] are free from tablets." In 1771, José Muñoz concluded that in Mindong "the plague of the tablets is extinguished. When adults wish to get baptized, it is easy to convince them to destroy their tablets, since they see that most Christians do not have them and that the missionaries do not tolerate them." After the 1770s, missionary sources from Mindong do not mention ancestral tablets, a sign that in all likelihood most Christians were by then complying with church policy.⁴⁸

47. Cited in GH, 2: 47.

48. On tablets in northern Fujian, see letter by Juan Feng Shiming, Fuzhou, February 27, 1753 (GH, 2: 459–60n37): "Thank God, the Christians of Fuan and Fuzhou, who had placed [such tablets] in their private houses by order of the local officials during the strictest persecutions, following some exhortation [on my part] have now destroyed and burned them *all*" (*italics added*). See also letter by Juan

*The Reform of Filial Piety
Through the Idea of Salvation*

As this discussion has shown, the practice of ancestral rituals provoked controversy and confusion. The missionaries were few in number, and, especially in times of government suppression, they had scarce opportunities to visit the homes of Christians and to monitor participation in forbidden ritual activities. In locales like Muyang or Dingtou, however, missionaries were in residence for most of the year and could take a more hands-on approach to religious practice. Moreover, the tight-knit nature of those Christian communities probably eased the pressure from relatives to conform to Confucian ritual propriety, and the church prohibitions were less of a burden. By the 1770s tablets had disappeared from most homes in those locales.

A question remains. How could the prescriptive framework proposed by missionaries and exemplified by Morales's "Explication of Catholic Filial Piety" become acceptable to Fuan Christians and part of their local identity? In other words, why were converts willing to shed ancestral rituals, the traditional Chinese way to show gratitude to the deceased, to obtain favors from them, and to cement ties with one's kin? The most plausible answer lies in the concept of salvation. Fujianese Christians, as already noted, attached great importance to the idea of salvation and showed deep concern for the last rituals before death, especially confession and extreme unction. These soteriological preoccupations, as reflected in the practices and testimonies of converts in Qing memorials, loomed prominently in the life of local Christians. The concern is confirmed by Li Ba, the prefect of Funing in the late 1750s. He found that for the locals, whom he called "Fuan rustics" (*Fuan yumin* 福安愚民), the soteriological aspect represented the main

Feng Shiming, Fuzhou?, November 22, 1751, quoted in GH, 2: 463n41, referring to the situation of Fuan (Feng was in Fuan from January to late spring 1751): "The ancestral tablets that the Christians had in their private residences [in Fuan] were eliminated after a brief exhortation [on my part], except for those of the literati and the rich, who in some cases still keep them in fear of the threats by the officials that they will lose their properties or their degrees of bachelors." See also letters of Teradillos, September 10, 1756, quoted in GH, 2: 436; and letter of August 6, 1758, quoted in GH, 2: 437n62: "Here [in Fuan] there are no tablets [among Christians] . . . ; but they are found elsewhere." Letter of José Muñoz to provincial, December 4, 1771, quoted in GH, 2: 529n27.

attraction of Christianity: “What tricks [Fuan] people into following [the missionaries] is their theory of afterlife (*sihou zhi shuo* 死後之說), which is mysterious like an hallucination and unexpectedly can touch a nerve in the stupid folk and move the crowds. [Such theories] thus become even more attractive than those of Yang Zhu and Mozi.”⁴⁹

Confessions by converts arrested in 1746 confirm this appeal and reveal that salvation was first of all an individual, rather than communal, concern. The Muyang Christian Guo Huiren, for example, when asked why people believed in the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven, responded: “The reason why we believe is [that we are convinced by] the theories (*shuo* 說) [of Christianity]. [According to such theories], we committed sins before being born. But after death we will ascend to heaven, and when the end of the world comes, we will be resurrected to life. That’s why we believe firmly.” In a nutshell, Guo was describing the Christian theories of original sin, the journey of the soul in the afterlife, and the resurrection of the body after judgment day. Another Muyang convert, Wang Ejian 王鄂薦, plainly stated that the missionary “told me that after death I could ascend to heaven. Since [I thought] that there are advantages [entailed by these teachings] (*you haochu* 有好處), I thus believed. This is true. I really wholeheartedly believe [in those teachings], and I would for no reason dare to recant.” In a joint confession, Guo Huiren and his companions confirmed that there were many “good things” in Christianity for them: “the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven can obtain forgiveness of the sins committed before birth; we can ascend to heaven after death and even be reborn after the end of the world. There are many good things [in this religion for us]. That is why we have proselytized (*quan* 勸) among the people on behalf [of the missionaries].” Belief was just one element in the path to salvation. Christian religious practices were the other necessary step. The *beata* Guo Xiaoshi described how the coveted goal of eternal blessing could be reached: “We listen to the sermons [of the missionaries]. We pray every day and confess our sins (*chanhui* 懺悔). Thus, after death we will ascend to heaven and reach the perfection of the Dao 道.”⁵⁰

49. Li Ba, “Inscription for the Confucian School of Fuan,” FAXZ, 135: 其所挾以惑取者，徒以死後之說，俯張爲幻，不虞其惊愚動眾，乃能駕揚墨而上之也。

50. Quotations are from AMEP, vol. 436, ff. 142, 139, and 137, respectively (YQTW, doc. 34, 136, 138, 140). The last quotation employs the Buddhist terminology for “confession of sins” (*chanhui*). It is impossible to ascertain whether here

Personal salvation, however, was obviously too limited a concept for a Chinese audience, and Mindong Christians were prompted by the imperatives of filial piety to extend it to their deceased relatives. The first generation of converts encountered the greatest difficulty in accepting the Christian version of salvation since, according to most Dominicans, their pagan parents were inexorably condemned to hell. But by the second generation converts could pray for the souls of the dead parents. Christian ritual and devotional practices were a viable substitute for ancestral rituals and non-Christian funerary rituals in pleasing the deceased. The concept of Christian purgatory (*lianyu* 煉獄, literally “prison of purification”) and of the salvation journey of the soul in the Christian afterlife was pivotal. As Morales indicated in his essay on Christian filial piety, if a Christian truly desired the well-being of the deceased ancestors, the solution was “to erect an altar to the Lord of Heaven and ask the Lord to benefit the souls of the dead.” Priests could be paid to celebrate masses for souls in purgatory, and the descendants themselves could become active participants in the process of liberation of the ancestors from purgatory and expedite their ascent to paradise through alms-giving, abstinence, fast, penances, and mortification, as means to earn merits for the deceased. A similar rationale was also at work for one’s own salvation, and deceased Christians in Fuan occasionally left part of their estate “for the welfare of their own souls,” an expression that usually meant a gift of their properties to the church to celebrate memorial masses of suffrage after their death. Such was the case of the *beata* Isabel Chen 陳 from Qidong, “a very charitable woman, daughter of rich parents.” According to a 1761 missionary record, “she left in her testament half of what she inherited from her family for the welfare of her soul and the other half to the poor.”⁵¹

The idea of purgatory became known among Christian converts in Fujian in the first decades of the Catholic missions. Stories of “visits to the underworld,” authored by Christians from the Jesuit community of Quanzhou in the 1630s and 1640s, for example, testify to their fascination with the judgment of God in the afterlife. In one such visionary visit by a local Christian, entitled *Clear Proofs of the Judgment of the Lord*

we have an interpretation by yamen scribes or the precise words used by the *beata*. For a comparison of Buddhist *chanhui* and Christian confession, see Zürcher 2006.

51. On masses for the deceased, see Morales 1650s?, f. 180v. On Isabel Chen, see GH, 2: 441n77.

of Heaven (Tianzhu shenpan mingzheng 天主審判明證), local men held in purgatory are the main characters. Upon encountering the visitor, they ask him to order their living relatives to recite a large number of prayers, 3,800 to be precise, in order for them “to win the right to rest in the place of tranquility.” Since Christianity in the Fuan region evolved into a family tradition, prayers in honor of the dead as described in this story and masses as recommended by Morales probably became a common occurrence.⁵²

Among the aims of the Dominican Confraternities of the Rosary was also the earning of indulgences, which entail the transfer of merits accumulated by the living to the deceased for their quicker ascent to heaven from purgatory. The rules of the Zhangzhou chapter of the confraternity, for example, stipulated that “if someone is already dead, and their relatives or friends register his/her name in his/her behalf, then they will be able to transfer their merits onto [the deceased].” Indulgences for the souls in purgatory could be earned by reciting the rosary in front of an image of the Virgin of Sorrows. Moreover, there were “fixed days to celebrate masses for those members who died.”⁵³

The circulation of miraculous stories of the power of prayer to save souls from torments of the afterlife deepened the belief in purgatory. Such stories, for example, are contained in a collection about the miracles of the rosary diffused by the Dominicans in Fujian, entitled *The True Peace of Humankind*, authored by Arcadio del Rosario (1641–86: see Chapter 6). Bishop Pedro Sanz had the collection published in 1740 in Fuan so that “these Christians will have [materials] to read and will benefit from them,” and the book circulated locally at least until the 1860s. The nature of the collection, both edifying and entertaining, made it a popular book, especially because Christians enthusiastically applied the *exempla* offered in the stories to their own lives. The rosary, as illustrated by the *exempla*, could help devoted reciters and especially members of the Confraternity of the Rosary accomplish miraculous feats, including avoidance of natural disasters, curing of illness, the conception of a son, or the rescuing of children from sudden death. Another

52. For a partial translation of the *Clear Proofs*, see Standaert 1993, 62–63. Visits to the underworld were a common theme in Chinese Buddhism and popular religion; for examples dating to the Tang dynasty, see Gjertson 1989. Like their Jesuit counterparts, Dominican catechisms clearly explained the idea of purgatory; see Juan García 1642, 44b–45b; Pedro Sanz 1740s?, 1.6a; and Royo 1735, 5b.

53. Ventallol post-1718, 1a (rule no. 1) and 1b–2a (rule no. 4).

reason for the popularity of this devotion was the power it had to ransom the souls of the deceased from purgatory. The stories in *Renlei zhen'an* grouped under the heading "The prayer of the rosary saves souls from hell" highlighted the power of prayer by the living to help the dead in purgatory.⁵⁴ In one of these stories, some souls in purgatory appeared to a woman and made the following request:

If there are relatives and friends who know people nearing death, they should recite the rosary for them. Also, no matter whether the relatives know [about such people], one should always pray for the souls in purgatory. Next to the eucharist celebrated during mass [for us in purgatory], the recitation of the rosary represents the greatest grace. We numerous people will exit purgatory and ascend to heaven, thanks to those who have prayed for us.⁵⁵

The passage underscores a concern for the deceased relatives similar to that expressed by Pablo Cai Wenan in Zhangzhou in his modified ancestral tablet. However, as the translation of a Western story by a missionary, it also introduces a more universal concern for all the souls

54. The popularity of the *Renlei zhen'an* is confirmed by the Dominican Tommaso Maria Gentili (1828–88), vicar apostolic of Fujian, who was stationed in Fuan between 1854 and 1868. He had the woodblocks of the collection destroyed "because the Christians were abusing the examples offered in the book to clarify the doctrine," and the book almost disappeared; see GH, 5: 72; on Gentili, see GH, 2: 245–46. To a nineteenth-century priest like Gentili, the stories probably seemed too steeped in superstitious beliefs in the supernatural—thus the "abuses" of the Christians—although they had been acceptable to the earlier generations of missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Due to Gentili's campaign against the book, only one manuscript copy (now preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Chin. d. 43) is known to have survived, made at the orders of Alexander Wylie (1815–87), the famous Protestant missionary and sinologist. Del Rosario reached southern Fujian in the summer of 1676 and established contacts with the converts of the Zhangzhou region, in particular with members of the Yan family of Houban. While there, he started writing the collection and asked the Christian literatus Yan Mo to correct his text. For that reason, Yan had a copy made, probably in the early 1680s. Del Rosario, however, died in 1686 without accomplishing the publication of his work. In 1696, Yan Mo wrote a preface to the copy he had revised, which was finally published by Pedro Sanz only in 1740; a copy of this 1740 edition, with the preface by Yan Mo, was confiscated by Qing authorities in Fujian in 1746; see AMEP, vol. 436, f. 151 (YQTW, doc. 34, 130). On prayers for the souls of purgatory in early modern Europe, see, e.g., Delumeau 1990, 388–98; on the Dominican preaching and illustration of the concept of purgatory through frescoes in dedicated chapels in Europe, see Delumeau 1990, 385, 399.

55. Del Rosario 1700, ff. 51r–v.

of the dead, not just one's own ancestors. Christianity, like Buddhism, not only tried to cater to the Chinese preoccupation with filial piety but also offered a message of universal salvation and of altruistic concern for others, in defiance of the vertical ties of the kinship system. In spite of this universalist claim, a reformed Christian piety attracted the Chinese because of the concern for the salvation of ancestral souls. The hope of salvation for oneself and one's ancestors pushed converts to burn their tablets and to accept the idea that fortune and misfortune come from the Lord of Heaven, not from the ancestors. The ancestors, in fact, needed the living more than the living needed them.

The rationale for Chinese ancestral rituals was rather different from that of Christian prayers for the deceased. As anthropological studies have shown, one of the main goals of ancestral rituals was to please the deceased so that they would heap benefits on their descendants, either as a lineage group (embodied by the altar in the hall) or as a particular family (domestic altar). In this respect, grave rites and the geomantic practices applied to burials fulfilled functions similar to those of domestic ancestral rituals, because they were designed to bring good fortune to descendants of the family. Since ancestors were believed to bestow material benefits on the living in exchange for sacrifices, the living could not really pray *for* the ancestors, as Catholics did. Rather, they prayed *to* the ancestors. Catholic practice, in this respect, found a parallel in Buddhism, not in ancestral rituals. One cannot but think of the famous Buddhist story of the Chinese monk Mulian, who was able to rescue his sinful mother from purgatory through his virtues. Mulian's story was the Buddhist response to the Chinese cultural imperative of filial piety, and Catholic missionaries positioned their own system within the framework of these existing soteriological theories. The Christian way of honoring the ancestors would not have been a complete novelty for Fuan Christians, since Buddhism had for centuries propagated the idea of purgatory (*diyu* 地獄, "underworld prison") and the related tradition of death rituals to assure the smooth rebirth of the deceased from purgatorial torments. The popular Buddhist concept of karmic retribution, which justified the existence of purgatory and even misfortune in this life, was the basis for a system of cosmic justice congruent with the Catholic theory of divine punishment of the living and the dead. In early modern Europe, many theologians believed that Christian punishment was not deferred to the afterlife but swiftly executed in this life through illness, family disgrace, or death. Similarly, and counter to the

classic theory of the workings of *karma*, popular tracts and literature of the Ming-Qing period understood karmic retribution as including punishments in this life, in a way similar to Christian divine punishment. In Christianity in contrast to Buddhism, damnation was eternal, however. Nevertheless, the invention of the Christian purgatory offered hope for salvation to everybody, much as did the Buddhist purgatory. By introducing their new understanding of filial piety, the Dominicans concurrently accommodated Chinese sensibilities and tried to reform the meaning of proper respect for living parents and deceased ancestors. In the process, both Catholic theology and local views of what constituted filiality changed, and the Christian discourse of filial piety and its attendant lack of ancestral rituals prevailed among converts. Accepted within Fuan local society by the late eighteenth century, this new Christian filiality emerged as one of the founding elements of local Christian identity.⁵⁶

Another crucial element in the formation of this Christian filiality was the reinvention of the meaning of filial piety among women, in particular within the controversial, yet fully localized institution of the *beatas*. This gendered facet of filiality, and its internal contradictions and outcomes, is the subject of next chapter.

56. For an anthropological view of ancestral rituals, see, e.g., Rubie Watson 1988, 207. In the Buddhist context, *diyu* is better translated “purgatory” (i.e., a place of temporary punishment); see Teiser 1993 and 1994. However, the Chinese Christian terminology must be translated differently: *lianyu* means purgatory (i.e., a place of temporary punishment), and *diyu* means hell (a place of eternal punishment). On popular notions of karmic retribution in the Ming and Qing periods, see Cheung 1995 and Martin Huang 1997; on purgatory in seventeenth-century *baojuan*, see Overmyer 1999, 240–47; on salvation in the Chinese popular tradition, see Myron Cohen 1988; on Buddhist and Daoist funerary rituals and rituals to free souls from purgatory, see Goossaert 2007, 333–44.

E I G H T

*Virginity, Chastity,
and Sex*

In the final years of the Ming dynasty, with the Manchus threatening on the northeastern borders and the empire mired in military and political crises, a predicament of infinitely smaller dimensions but possibly of greater import for the Miao lineage of Muyang and the Christian men and women of the region was unfolding in Fuan. The daughter of the Christian literatus Juan Miao Shixiang, the highest-ranking degree-holder of his clan and one of only a handful of *juren* in that corner of Fujian, decided to avoid marriage and remain a virgin as a *beata* of the Dominican Third Order in order to devote her life to religious cultivation. The effects of her decision rippled outward and embroiled in controversy not only her prominent father and her Miao relatives but also a major lineage in the county seat of Fuan, in all likelihood the Chen of Shanghang. According to the Dominican chronicler Victorio Riccio, her father had arranged to marry Maria, her Christian name, “with a youngster of her quality, noble and rich, albeit an infidel . . . in the major parentage of that town of Fuan.” But when the groom’s family heard of Maria’s decision to remain chaste,

they were greatly offended, since [their son] was one of the best possible parties that one could wish in the world. For that reason, they sent a message to [Maria’s] father, saying that they would not consent for any reason to cancel

the wedding, even if it were to cost them their entire properties and a legal recourse all the way to the emperor of China.

Miao Shixiang found himself in a terrible bind. He did not wish the case brought before the local magistrate for fear of the possible damage to his fortune and his honor. Yet "since he was a Christian in fear of God, he [also] did not dare to forbid to his daughter such a laudable choice, nor persuade her to get married." Juan consulted the friars, and even the family of the groom, despite being "infidels," asked the Spanish priests to convince Maria to change her mind. But when father and daughter proved adamant in their commitment, their opponents filed a denunciation with the local magistrate accusing the friars of "many evil actions, and of advising young girls to remain unmarried for shameful aims." They also asked that the foreigners be expelled from China. Their petition, however, did not receive a favorable response, probably because of Miao Shixiang's high rank. The groom decided to take matters into his own hands. After a year of squabbling, he traveled to Mu-yang to force the young woman to marry him.

To end the pursuit, Maria "cut her hair and sent it to the fiancée with this message: 'As a sign that I will never marry you, I send you the best ornament of a woman, my hair.'" This act convinced the groom's family of the irreversibility of Maria's decision, and they struck a deal with Miao Shixiang. The symbolic meaning of a woman's cutting her hair was unambiguous: in both seventeenth-century Europe and Ming China, it signaled a woman's unshakeable determination to reject marriage. In China, it was also used to escape remarriage, as a case in the Fuan gazetteer illustrates. In the late Ming, a local widow "cut her hair to become [like a] nun" (*xue fa wei ni* 削髮爲尼) to spurn the entreaties of a man who wanted her and her property. Whereas the widow ended up committing suicide to escape the suitor's rapaciousness, Maria Miao was lucky enough to receive her father's support and thus succeeded in solving her predicament. Shixiang compensated the lineage in Fuan for its financial losses and arranged to obtain another bride from the Miao clan for them.¹

1. Miao Shixiang had to pay the groom's family quadruple the bride price he had received; he also found another young girl for the marriage, adopted her, and, contrary to custom, endowed her with a dowry of 300 taels of silver. On the cutting of hair, see FAXZ, 475; cf. T'ien 1988, 35. T'ien (*ibid.*, 37) observes that "cutting the

But Miao Shixiang's execution in 1649 for being a partisan of the Southern Ming regime revived the desire of the Fuan lineage to redress this perceived affront to their honor and to possess what they considered theirs. The young man slighted by her refusal petitioned the magistrate of the new Qing regime asking that she become his wife as contractually agreed. The magistrate so ordered, and Maria "escaped . . . across the mountains and forests, hiding in remote places, experiencing great inconveniences and fears" but avoiding capture. Although the prospective groom and his family finally gave her up for lost, "the Lord sent her more troubles. After her father's death at the hands of the Tartars, all her properties were seized by the authorities, and from being extremely rich, she became poor and forsaken." Yet her resolve did not change: "even when she was offered marriage by men of her quality, with whom she could have lived in abundance according to her noble status, she never agreed to it, saying that in the hands of Christ, her groom, she was very rich and powerful, without any interest for the things of the world, the Lord being all things to her."²

The semi-hagiographic story of Maria Miao is similar to that of other Fuan Christian women, as this chapter illustrates. Maria's tale exemplifies the dilemmas that some Christian women and their families faced over their religious choices. By the mid-eighteenth century, there were around 250 *beatas* in Fuan county alone, most of them belonging to prosperous farming families who could afford to support them. In some cases, they came from families of lower-degree holders. But, even more important, Maria's story illuminates the social dynamics that surrounded the life of young women in late imperial Fujian in general. Women were expected to marry early, following arrangements made by their families. In a tight marriage market, they could earn a handsome bride price for their families while cementing an alliance with a new or an established lineage. In the case of Maria and other Christian *doncellas* (unmarried girls), however, new religious imperatives and choices provoked family crises that disclose a second area of tension between Christianity and local society: the condition of women within the patriarchal system.

Chapter 7 centered on the proper meaning of filial piety in the prevalently masculine framework of ancestral rituals. This chapter

hair and disfiguring the body were usually the methods used [by widows to avoid remarriage]."

2. All quotations here are from RH, ff. 179r-v.

focuses on how filial piety was expressed within a feminine framework. For a woman, being filial meant accepting marriage and its reproductive expectations within the patriarchal organization of family life. It meant acceptance of an arranged marriage and then obedience to one's in-laws and husband. Obedience to one's husband and his family, especially in the Ming and Qing periods, extended even beyond the spouse's death, in the institution of chaste widowhood. The *beatas* and their virginal status outside the institutions of marriage or chaste widowhood challenged dominant Chinese social mores. Unsurprisingly, the male perception of these women was initially negative, and the first generation of *beatas* had to endure fierce opposition from local society. Male anxiety extended in general to all female relationships with the foreign priests. This anxiety derived both from the potential sexual nature of contacts between friars and local women and from fear of a female challenge to male authority. Both sentiments were reinforced by the broader late imperial discourses about the predatory nature of the clergy, Christian and non-Christian alike, and about women's unhealthy attraction to religious activities outside the home. For men, however, married women's participation in Christian rituals must have been a minor concern when compared with the absolute rejection of marriage in favor of a consecrated life.

This chapter reveals yet another facet of the process of Christian entrenchment in local society by examining the experience of women, who were central to the life of Christian communities in Fujian. It aims to illuminate why women may have converted and how their embrace of religious virginity functioned as an effective way to gain agency and acceptance and stretched the limits of patriarchal dominance within both their own society and the church.

Women, Religion, and Christianity: Male Perception and Female Experience

Beatas established a peculiar presence in Fujian. Women seldom figured prominently in contemporary Chinese Christian communities, most of which were supervised by Jesuits. The Jesuits did minister to women, but their approach was generally more detached than that of the Dominicans. Women's activities, moreover, remained largely limited to the domestic sphere, although some elite women in Jiangnan engaged in charitable work within a female Christian network, and female devo-

tional congregations emerged during the seventeenth century. The Jesuits' limited interaction with women derived from an early strategic decision to concentrate on household heads, as Philippe Couplet (1623?-93) explicitly noted:

If the fathers who first entered in this kingdom to preach the Gospel had continued to don the robes of bonzes [as they initially did], they would have had an easier task in dealing with women. Women have the freedom to talk to these priests of the idols and to visit their temples to recite their prayers. But the first missionaries decided that it was more important for our religion to deal with magistrates, with literati, and with family heads, rather than with those persons [i.e., women] who are more naturally disposed to piety, and who can in any case be instructed in our religious mysteries without visits and meetings, either through the reading of books or through the intermediation of their husbands.

Keeping visits and meetings to a minimum, the Jesuits conducted Catholic rituals in segregated chapels for women and performed confessions only in special places easily monitored by males of the household. Following the suggestion of Xu Guangqi's granddaughter Candida, they also promoted the distribution of pious literature to elite women who could read as a means of instructing them indirectly.³

This Jesuit prudence was due, in no small part, to the widespread association among Chinese men of women and religious heterodoxy. Women frequented temples and were acolytes of monks, nuns, or mediums. Sometimes they formed religious sororities. All these activities were connected, in men's minds, with sexual misconduct. Lineage rules prescribed the seclusion of women as a way of forestalling bad influences from the "three nuns" (Buddhist nuns, Daoist nuns, and female fortunetellers) and "six grannies" (brokers, matchmakers, sorceresses, bewitchers, medical women, and midwives). The rules also forbade visits to temples, festivals, and other celebrations. Chinese literature is replete with stories of lewd monks taking advantage of young girls in temples and during festivals. Imperial laws attest to the widespread suspicion of the clergy in sexual matters and stipulated severe punishments for sexual crimes committed by Buddhist monks or Daoist priests.⁴

3. For Ricci's experience with women, see D'Elia, ed., 1942-49, 2: 338; quotation from Couplet 1688, 8; cf. King 1998; and HCC, 393-97.

4. On women's religious activities, see Furth 1990, 197; and Mann 1997, 191. On lineage rules, see Hui-chen Wang Liu 1959, 94-95; Mann 1997, 192; and

In Fujian, the Dominicans also encountered the strict gender-segregation seen by the Jesuits. Victorio Riccio, for example, observed in 1667 that women

lead a retired life and are kept in a seclusion . . . that exceeds that of the nuns in Europe, since nobody can see them, unless it is with their fathers, their brothers, and their husbands. They are so accustomed to cloistered life that they would consider anything different really strange. If by any chance a man talks with a woman whom he does not know, everybody assumes it is not for a good aim.

Initially, therefore, women in Fuan converted to Christianity through the intermediation of close male relatives. According to the early chronicles of the mission, "the husbands themselves brought the priests to their own homes in order for them to teach, baptize, and confess their wives."⁵

Common rituals, however, presented greater difficulties. Since the Confucian guardians of public morals frowned on women's visits to temples, one of the first Dominicans, Juan Bautista de Morales, in the 1630s ordered that only women over 50 years of age could attend mass in church. Having heard the sermon, they were to repeat it to the younger girls at home, "so that they could also enjoy the fruit of the divine word." But with the growth of the community, "girls (*mozas*), elderly women, married women, and virgin women (*doncellas*)" were able to overcome resistance at home and started, in the 1640s, to attend mass behind a screen dividing them from men or in "a space similar to the choir for nuns." Missionary letters report that whereas women's attendance of public rituals became commonplace in the larger communities of Fuan and the subprefecture of Funing, difficulties remained insurmountable elsewhere. "Confession," observed Riccio, "offers fewer problems, since it is done publicly and often with a division between the confessor and the female penitent or in front of her husband."⁶

Durand-Dastès 2002. On legal punishments for the clergy, see Jones et al. 1994, 132–33, 352; and Sommer 2000, 100.

5. See RH, f. 67v; and Aduarte 1962–63, 2: 487.

6. See Juan García 1648, f. 48; Varo 1678, f. 347v; RH, f. 68r; AMEP, vol. 428, f. 855; and Biblioteca Casanatense, ms. 1074, ff. 222r–27r, case 8, presented by Arcadio del Rosario in 1693: "Here among the *chincheos* [i.e., in the region of Minnan], where there are few Christians, women are segregated, but Christian women in the interior are free to participate in the mass."

Whenever male opposition impeded women's religious activities, however, they found ways to circumvent it. They might gather in a house, where "the minister would go secretly, and there he would confess them, give them communion, and teach them, without risk of scandal." Indeed, in late imperial times, prohibitions and suspicions notwithstanding, women continued to test the boundaries between the inner and the outer spheres of their lives by participating in religious activities and pilgrimages outside their houses. Official sources often decried female initiative in religious matters. In the mid-eighteenth century, for example, the famous statesman Chen Hongmou lamented the excessive freedom of women who engaged in pilgrimages, even forming "sisterhoods and spend[ing] the night in local temples." As governor of Fujian in 1752, he himself observed and policed the heterodox activities of Christian male and female commoners in Fuan, Putian, Longxi, Fuqing, and Pingtan 平潭 counties.⁷

Fuan Christian women began congregating in clandestine meetings during the late Ming. In the 1640s, thirteen Christian women from the most notable families of the county, daughters and wives of "gentiles," who had been forbidden by their families to participate in Christian activities, "contrived a plot to call [Juan García] . . . and have him join them with the favor of a very dark night." One night they gathered in a house in the countryside, where they had possibly been sent to keep them safe during the fighting surrounding the Ming-Qing transition, and received the friar as arranged. He first gave a sermon to prepare them for the sacraments and then examined and baptized some who were catechumens. Confession followed, in preparation for communion. As the source almost comically tells us,

only the lady [of] the house [called Ines] was absent, to avoid raising the suspicions of her husband, who was very much opposed to the faith and who persecuted her for this reason. However, since her soul could not do without the much-desired spiritual consolation [of the sacraments], she made sure that her husband was sleeping, and then she carefully left his side and, without him hearing, went downstairs to the hall, knelt, and started confession.

The husband soon woke up and discovered that the women were locked in the hall with the foreign priest. He accused them of being adulterous and sacrilegious and unsuccessfully tried to knock down the door.

7. Quotation from RH, f. 68r; and from Mann 1991, 221; for Chen Hongmou's memorial on Fujian Christians, see QTS, vol. 1, doc. 106, 185–86.

Apparently trapped in the house, the husband returned to his room, but his elderly mother continued to shout at the women for the remainder of the night from behind the locked door. The women ignored her, continued their exercises, and early in the morning attended mass.

In the face of her husband's opposition, Ines persevered in her beliefs for another seventeen years, until he and their seven male children were baptized. This was not an isolated episode; missionary sources relate several similar stories. Here we see the same patterns of behavior condemned by lineage rules and officials: wives or daughters are congregating with celibate religious specialists, endangering their virtue, and practicing heterodox teachings and rituals. Women in Fuan apparently had little fear of their male relatives. By congregating at night to confess and communicate with the Spanish missionaries against the will of husbands, fathers, and brothers, Christian women in Fuan defied the patriarchal authority of the lineage and, indirectly, the morality promoted by the state.⁸

What men like the resigned husband of Ines considered most scandalous were the magic, physical, and almost "sexual" elements in Catholic rituals. In the ceremony of baptism, for example, the priest had first to breathe on the person's face to exorcise evil spirits. Then he made the sign of the cross, the symbol of redemption, on the initiate's forehead and breast. Next, the imposition of hands and placement of blessed salt in the mouth of the person followed. The priest then touched the ears and nostrils of the person with his saliva and later anointed the catechumen with holy oil on the breast, the shoulders, and the head. It is not surprising that non-Christians accused missionaries of "undressing women during baptism and talking to women for dishonest aims."⁹ Moreover, when the sacrament of extreme unction was administered on the point of death, several parts of the body had to be anointed, including the feet. Riccio observed that not even husbands were allowed to see their wives' feet in China.

Anti-Christian authors were incensed by these mysterious and scandalous rites not just because they went beyond sexual propriety but because they affected the proper order of society. The famous anti-Christian critic Xu Dashou 許大受, for example, revealed to Chinese

8. See RH, ff. 225r-v; for a summary of this episode, see GH, 1: 222.

9. RH, f. 67v-68r.

audiences in Hangzhou and Fuzhou between 1623 and 1625 that foreign missionaries

invite ignorant women at night to come in front of [instead of staying behind] the scarlet curtains [i.e., the teacher's seat]. They close the doors and mark the women with holy oil, give them holy water, and even commit the crime of secretly lusting after them by placing their hands on five places of their bodies. What more can they add to the disorder between men and women?

Xu labeled this an inversion of *yin* and *yang*. It was precisely this overturning of gender roles, not just the presence of a "threatening male" outside the family structure, that men considered the most fearful consequence of heterodoxy.¹⁰

Christianity was particularly reprehensible because it affirmed the equality of men and women, obviously subverting the proper order of society, as Xu noted: "As for the intermingling of men and women within this heterodox association, they even explicitly praise it by saying: 'The Lord of Heaven loves . . . [women] very much.' Some even say that it is very easy for them [women] to be born in Heaven, but on what do they base these [statements]?" Xu was a devout Buddhist and followed the current theory that women could not achieve nirvana until they had first been reincarnated as men. But what matters here is that both Xu's Confucian and Buddhist souls agreed on one point: women had to be kept in a subordinate position. Ultimately, the perception that Christianity, heterodox millenarian movements, and popular culture condoned sexual licentiousness had deep implications, since sexual anarchy signaled a possible reversal of the sociopolitical order. The codeword for such a reversal was *luan* 亂, "disorder." Some gentry in Fuan shared Xu's attitude. In a 1647 document addressed to the local magistrate, members of the Chen lineage of Shanghang reacted to the reversal of gender roles among local Christians by accusing them of "gathering in a nest with the foreigners to form a close-knit clique and

10. On taboos about women's feet, see Gulik 1974, 222; on the unction of the feet and the missionary approach to it, see Margiotti 1958, 353–54. Xu's comments on Christian women were written in 1623 in Hangzhou, in his *Guide to Confutation of the Holy Dynasty* (*Shengchao zuopi* 聖朝佐闢); in 1625 Xu traveled to Fuzhou to distribute his writings among local literati and warn them against Aleni. In the 1640s a reprint of his essays was issued in Fujian within the *Shengchao po xie ji*. Quotations are from Dudink 1993, 115–17, translating from Xu Dashou's *Shengchao zuopi*, 18a, 35a.

summoning and misleading men and women. Women gather in one hall and fall into their trap, and all of them act wickedly. To stop the foreigners from bringing disorder to China (*yidi luan Hua* 夷狄亂華), we should unite and eradicate them.” The disorders hinted at here were mainly the confusion of gender roles and its possible implications.¹¹

The danger was compounded by the fact that the culprits were foreigners. Allegations of sexual liaisons between Chinese women and foreigners were disturbing to Han Chinese at the end of the Ming because they brought back memories of the Mongol invasions and the violation of Chinese women. The term *yi* 夷 was heavily charged with negative connotations, especially in the late Ming and early Qing, when it became a means of alluding to the Manchu invaders. Christianity was a foreign doctrine, and Christian literati like Zhu Zongyuan 朱宗元 (ca. 1616–60) in Zhejiang grappled with the issue of their faith’s foreignness in their writings and tried to free the term *yi* from its negative overtones.¹²

In spite of all obstacles, however, Dominicans and Franciscans in Fuan found that women’s enthusiasm overcame male resistance, so much so that in 1647 the county magistrate asked Francisco Capillas “whether he had done any witchcraft to the Christians, since without it, it would be impossible that women would feel closer [to the friars] than to their husbands.”¹³ At first the friars did not follow the Jesuit policy of

11. Xu’s quotation is from Dudink 1993, 116, translating from Xu Dashou’s *Shengchao zuopi*, 31a. See also *Kouduo richao*, 4: 22b–23a, in CCT ARSI, 7: 298–99 (Zürcher, trans., 2007, 416) for Aleni’s statement that there is no difference between the souls of men and those of women. Quotation from Morales et al. 1650s?, f. 403v, in Chinese-language memorial of Chen lineage against Chen Wanzhong and the Christians, ca. 1647; Spanish version in GH, 1: 209–10. On the connection between licentiousness and *luan*, see Sommer 2000, 35.

12. In the Qing, for example, the term *yuanyi* (遠夷, *yi* from remote areas) seems to have been a derogatory term. *Yi* and *hu* 胡, an oblique reference to the Manchus, had been used in the original manuscript of Gu Yanwu’s 顧炎武 *Rizhilu* 日知錄, but in the 1834 edition those words were purged. Since it was considered a sensitive term, this *yi* was sometimes replaced in Qing times by another *yi* 裔 (“border tribes” or “offspring”). See Santangelo 1988; and Lydia Liu 1999, 132–24. On the struggle to redefine the meaning of *yi* among Christians, see Okamoto Sai’s research as discussed in Wakeman 1985, 735–36; and Sachsenmaier 1998, 11–14, and 2001, 121–49; on the nineteenth-century British interpretation of *yi* as “barbarian,” see Lydia Liu 2004, chaps. 2 and 3.

13. Capillas 1894, f. 1v.

keeping a “safe” distance from women. Their attitude quite likely stemmed from a tradition of close mendicant supervision of pious women and of female congregations in Europe, Latin America, and the Philippines. There were Jesuit spiritual directors of nuns and “enlightened” women in the West and the colonies, but the mendicants’ activities in this area were more far-reaching and boasted a longer tradition. In Fuan, the early Dominicans, Capillas and Díez in particular, devoted much attention to women and “discussed with them matters of [spiritual] perfection.”¹⁴

As we saw in Chapter 2, in 1644 the local gentry reacted to the overtures of the friars to local women by organizing a “masquerade” in which caricatures of friars and local women engaged in lascivious behaviors represented the gentry’s anxiety about illicit sex occurring under the guise of spiritual guidance. To defuse the tension engendered by anti-Christian rumors like those expressed in the “masquerade,” in the mid- to late seventeenth century Dominicans in Fuan concluded that it was necessary to be more sensitive to local notions of propriety and to follow the Jesuits in adapting Catholic rituals, with special papal dispensations. Juan García, for example, adopted a more distant behavior toward women, who then accused him of being excessively withdrawn and strict (“despegado y riguroso”). The friars also started using long pincers to administer unction from a distance and stopped certain practices, such as the unction of the loins of the dying. They also built separate churches for men and women in the larger communities or strictly divided the sexes with a screen.¹⁵

14. On the experience of Dominicans as spiritual directors of women in colonial Lima, Peru, see Iwasaki 1993; in colonial Manila, see Joaquin 1988 and Villaroel 1996. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus explicitly forbid members to take charge of nuns, “because the members of this Society ought to be ready at any hour to go to any part of the world where they may be sent by the sovereign pontiff or their own superiors, they ought not to take on the care of souls, and still less ought they to take charge of religious women or any other women whatever to be their regular confessors or to direct them”; see Padberg 1996, 256.

15. See Juan García 1649a, 19; Varo 1685, ff. 39v, 42r. For the history of the papal dispensations and of pastoral practice regarding baptism in the China mission, see Margiotti 1958, 344–48, “Applicazione dei sacramentali.”

*Native Models for the Beatas:
Virgins, Goddesses, and Chaste Widows*

The *beatas*, a completely new institution, powerfully tested the gendered social order. This religious calling embodied an ascetic ideal that the friars brought with them from their native Spain to the Philippines and eventually to Fuan. Central to this ascetic state of life was the requirement of virginity. Local women first learned about this religious vocation from the friars' sermons. The protagonists of those homilies were famous Dominican tertiaries, such as St. Catherine of Siena and St. Rosa of Lima, who had remained virgins and spent their lives in God's service. In late imperial China, however, women were expected to marry and give birth to a male heir, and life-long virginity was thus abhorrent to most people. The concentration on women as mothers in medical and social discourse and the need to procreate to fulfill the filial obligations toward the ancestors precluded an exaltation of virginity similar to that found in Christianity. In medical circles, abstinence from sexual intercourse was seen as the cause of dreaded "dreams of intercourse with ghosts," thought to cause physical depletion. Physicians deemed such disorders especially common among celibate women (widows, nuns, palace women, and women who had delayed marriage for too long) and believed that the repression of sexual desire was their main cause. The corollary to this theory was that "sexual activity was imperative if a woman was to remain normal." This negative medical view of virginity reflected not only current physiological theories but also what Charlotte Furth calls a "gender system that stressed female weakness and enslavement to reproductive necessity."¹⁶

In spite of this, however, premarital virginity remained prized. Although not seen as a social virtue in and of itself, virginity was deemed a necessary precondition for fulfilling the role of the wife and remained an important component in the economy of marriage, as shown by legal materials. Obviously, *beatas* could not use the repertoire of medical and legal concepts surrounding virginity to justify their decision, since this

16. Quotations in Furth 2002, 292, 306, and 1999, 91. On *beatas* in Spain, see Christian 1981; in the Philippines, Joaquin 1988 and Villaroel 1996. On the beginning of the institution in Fuan, see Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 178.

social and reproductive discourse of virginity referred to a temporary condition in preparation for marriage.¹⁷

But this was not the only set of concepts available in late imperial China. It is in the idea of "religious virginity," as symbolized by certain goddesses and as chosen by religious adepts and nuns, that *beatas* must have found some inspiration. Since religiously motivated virginity in China was concerned less with physiological integrity and more with sexual renunciation and rejection of the married condition, it would be better to define it as celibate chastity, although virginity could remain one of its constituents. At least two main traditions nourished the controversial concept of celibacy, Buddhism and Daoism. In Buddhism, sexuality and desire were seen as the roots of the eternal cycle of suffering: "Love of life is the cause and sexual desire is the consequence. When cause and consequence are intertwined, one undergoes ten thousand births and ten thousand deaths. Changing one's heads and faces, one wanders in the six realms of rebirth and sees no beginning for deliverance." Marriage was obviously the way sexual desire and a love of life took a social form and had to be similarly rejected, at least by monks and nuns: "When man and woman get married, they plant a tree of bitterness and cast seeds broadly which take roots only in [purgatory]." The seeds of marriage were maternity and the loss of blood during delivery, which, together with menstruation, represented the extreme forms of pollution and made women into inferior and dangerous beings in Chinese popular religion and Buddhism.¹⁸

Guanyin 觀音 and Princess Miaoshan 妙善 are the two best-known examples of Buddhist "virgin goddesses," untouched by such pollution. The two figures are so intimately connected that Miaoshan is often superscribed by Guanyin. The ubiquitous Guanyin, as protectress of

17. The word used in legal documents of the Qing period for "virgin" was not the term employed in Christian circles (*tongshen/tongzhen* 童身/童貞 or similar compounds) but *chunü* (處女). *Chunü* meant "a girl living at home" and, by extension, an unmarried girl who has had no sexual intercourse. *Chunü* indicated individuals fitting a legal-medical definition of virginity. A virgin girl was in fact a piece of property in the marriage market, and she had to be given to the future husband in "pristine condition," so as to guarantee the purity of the ancestral line. A disgraced girl, on the other hand, became much less desirable and was destined for the position of concubine or prostitute, or marriage to a debased man.

18. Both quotations are Princess Miaoshan's words from a version of her legend, as quoted in Yü 2000, 333–34. On pollution, see Seaman 1981; Grant 1989; and Teng 1990.

women wishing for pregnancy and as asexual goddess, straddles the lines between motherhood/pollution and virginity/purity. Similarly, Miaoshan exemplifies the divergence between life in the world, embodied by marriage, and pursuit of religious enlightenment, found in celibacy. This tension between endorsement of the reproductive role of women and refusal of marriage in order to lead a life of religious commitment could go in both directions. On one hand, as Glen Dudbridge argues, Miaoshan's example provided a model for female celibacy, which inspired some to take that route, both as nuns and as members of lay sororities. On the other hand, however, as observed by Yü Chun-fang, most women in late imperial times did not follow this example and instead opted to engage in a "domesticated religiosity" that entailed a religious routine at home and sanctification through the fulfillment of their wifely duties.¹⁹

The Daoist tradition of celibacy was probably influenced by Buddhism and became important after the Six Dynasties, especially with the rise of monastic orders like Complete Perfection (*Quanzhen* 全真), which attracted female followers. However, Daoist celibacy was predicated not on suppression of sexual desire so as to escape the wheel of reincarnation but on the channeling of sexual energy to store power for the superior stages of meditational and inner-chemical practice. By the Ming and Qing periods, celibate women were rarely mentioned in Daoist sources, and existing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century inner-chemical texts written for women stress the importance of undertaking the Daoist path as part of a household and of being filial and obedient to one's husband.²⁰

Still, the myths of goddesses connected to Daoism continued to suggest to women the possibility of maintaining chastity, as Miaoshan had done. In Mindong, in particular, the flourishing cult to the goddess-shamaness Linshui furen, examined in Chapter 2, offered a symbolic repertoire for religiously motivated marriage resistance. By the early nineteenth century, in Funing subprefecture there were numerous

19. See Dudbridge 2004, 102; and Yü 2000, 337–38. Topley (1975, 74–76) describes the celibate lifestyle and positions of authority held by unmarried women employed in the silk industry who lived in communal vegetarian halls of the Xiantian dadao 先天大道 (Great Way of Former Heaven) devotional groups in Guangdong during the nineteenth century. Guanyin was one of the major figures extolled in the "precious volumes" (*baojuan*) of this tradition.

20. Despeux 2000, 398.

shrines dedicated to the goddess, and at least eleven were located in Fuan alone. The version of Linshui furen's story in the Daoist Canon describes her as a rebellious young woman, who "died without marrying and possesses young boys to speak about events through them." She refused to yield to family pressure to marry, and instead took to the mountains, where she engaged in Daoist practices of interior alchemy and in ritual studies. Linshui furen was even co-opted by Buddhism as one of the manifestations of the virgin bodhisattva Guanyin. Popular versions of her story normalized the deity, who ultimately accepted marriage and died while giving birth. This tragic connection with the travails of birth earned her the power to grant women a smooth delivery. In spite of her assimilation into the orthodox patriarchal order, her disorderly and rebellious behavior, never erased from the legend, may have been present in the minds of girls in late imperial times. The transmission of this image was accomplished by the diffusion of devotional hagiographies and the staging of ritual dramas and puppet shows at temple festivals. These forms of popular literature and theater dramatized the tension between the pursuit of enlightenment and salvation on one hand and attachment to the family on the other. Although the discourse of religious celibacy presented by figures such as Miaoshan or Linshui furen was usually normalized within the framework of patriarchal family relations, female religious celibacy and refusal of marriage nevertheless remained possibilities in the conceptual repertoire of the time and prepared a space for the introduction of Christian virginity and celibacy.²¹

21. Quotation from Lo 1993, 77. This version of her legend appears in the collection *Soushen ji* 搜神記, eventually included in the Daoist Canon; cf. Haar 1990, 359. The ambiguity of the image of Linshui furen is explored in Baptandier 1996, 132–33, who concludes that "the legendary story of Chen Jinggu [Linshui furen] is undoubtedly a kind of derision of marriage, but also a warning of its inevitability." On temples to Linshui furen in Fuan, see FAXZ, 228, 231; for temples in Mindong, see Xu Xiaowang 1993, 330. The eighteenth-century popular novel *Mindu bieji* 閩都別記 contains a detailed account of the goddess's early life, her marriage, her death while delivering a son, and her exploits against demons after she became a deity. This was the most popular version in late imperial Fujian and is known among devotees even today; see Lo 1993, 80, 89. On "novels" and other popular writings and songs on the Lady's legend, see Baptandier 1996, 106–8. For examples of puppet shows on the legend of Linshui furen in the counties of Shouning (Mindong) and Shanghang (southeastern Fujian), see Ye and Yuan 1996; and Ye and Wu 1997. The Shouning play stresses the Daoist-shamanic independent role of the goddess, whereas the Hakka play from Shanghang underlines her role as dutiful wife. The

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The missionaries, so intent on censuring Buddhism, Daoism, and local religions, could hardly have drawn on the examples of virgin goddesses or Buddhist nuns to propose the ideal of Christian virginité within a native framework. Instead, the discourse that missionaries used to explain the significance of Christian virginité and legitimize it in Fujian centered on, and expanded, concepts such as “chastity” (*zhen* 貞) and “chaste woman” (*zhennü* 貞女). These notions had become universally accepted in the Ming and Qing periods within the orthodox framework of the so-called cult of chastity. The cult was a state-sanctioned system, honoring, with ceremonial arches and shrines, widows who refused remarriage or committed suicide on the deaths of their husbands, as well as women who committed suicide to uphold their chastity. This system was an official endorsement of a broader social movement that extolled chaste women in order to promote correct norms of womanly behavior.²²

Marriage, not celibacy or virginité, organized the idea of this feminine chastity. This ideal of chastity was the closest orthodox category to Christian celibate virginité that missionaries could use. Ricci first made the comparison between Confucian chastity and Christian virginité and celibacy in his celebrated catechism, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義, 1604):

Those concerned for the salvation of the world feel deep pity for the situation in the world today, and have therefore made chastity and celibacy²³ rules of my humble Society. . . . There are at this time certain chaste women (*zhennü* 貞女) whose menfolk, to whom they have been betrothed, have died before they were married. To maintain their honor such women have refrained from a second betrothal (*shouyi wuer* 守義無二). Confucians praise such action and emperors

dynamic of “reintegration” of women in search of religious experience into the household is also reflected in hagiographic accounts contained in Qing *baojuan*; see Grant 1995, 45. The dramatic tension felt by women between salvation and family, a typical Buddhist problematic, is illustrated by the cycle of Woman Huang; see Grant 1989.

22. See Theiss 2002, 47; on the chastity cult, see also T'ien 1988 and Theiss 2004.

23. Literally, “to avoid sex and remain unmarried” *juese buqu* 絕色不娶.

give public recognition to it. Chastity of the kind which results in a refusal to transmit life to later generations is merely due to a desire to keep faith with a spouse; and yet to remain at home and to refrain from further espousals results in public tribute being paid to that person. Is it not unfair that we few friends should be censured when, due to our work for the Sovereign on High, . . . we have not time to concern ourselves with marriage? . . . [T]o remain single and unmarried allows one greater tranquility to perfect oneself, and makes it easier for one to extend [the perfection] to others.²⁴

Through this argument, Ricci attempted to explain his own celibate status to the Chinese, and he ingeniously introduced the comparison with chaste women in order to make palatable clerical celibacy, usually censored by “Confucians” (*Ruzhe* 儒者), by linking it with an accepted and familiar phenomenon, the cult of chastity. Significantly, however, Ricci here discussed only a special category of chaste women. Such women were not widows who had consummated their marriages, but *virgins* whose betrothed had died before the marriage and who decided to remain unmarried. To characterize the choice of this latter kind of “virgin widow,” people in late imperial times used the expressions *shou-shen* 守身 (to preserve the body, i.e., to remain a virgin) and *shou zhen* 守貞 (to preserve chastity). Obviously, Ricci chose these women because they were not merely chaste but virgin.²⁵

For the most part, Christian catechetical materials used compounds such as *tongshen* (童身), that is, the child body of a virgin. Diego de Pantoja in his *Qike* 七克 (1614), for example, spoke of religious celibacy as “preserving virginity” (*baoshou tongshen* 保守童身), as did Aleni in his *Zhifang wai ji* (1623). Jesuit authors created the neologism *shou tongshen*, which became the standard Catholic term for “virgin” thereafter. In Mindong both this new term and others were employed. In his 1670 “Vocabulary of the Mandarin Language,” the Dominican Varo called the Christian *virgenes* (i.e., the *beatas*) in Fuan either *tongshen* 童身 or *tongzhen* 童貞 and referred to virginity as *tongzhen* 童貞. In González de San Pedro’s *Shengjiao cuoyao* (1706), the term is used to

24. Ricci 1985, 416–17. *Shouyi* is used in general for widows avoiding remarriage; see *Hanyu da cidian*, 3: 1306.

25. See *Hanyu da cidian*, 3: 1299–300 (*shoushen*) and 1302 (*shouzhen*). A similar expression is *shoujie* 守節, which is, however, applied to widows refusing to remarry (ibid., 1306). Ricci used *shouyi*, a general expression. In discussing chaste behavior, Aleni and his disciples used the expression *shouzhen*; see *Kouduo richao*, 3: 20a–21a, in CCT ARSI, 7: 217–20 (Zürcher, trans., 2007, 356–57).

indicate celibate virgin saints and comes close to the *tongzhenshen* 童貞身 applied by Qing authorities to the *beatas* (probably an echo of the name supplied by arrested Christians). These words were an extension of then-current compounds such as *shoushen* 守身 and *shouzhen* 守貞 and referred to two related and yet distinct concepts: virginity (*tongzhen* 童貞 or *tongshen* 童身) and chastity (*zhen* 貞). This linguistic overlapping highlights the ambiguous nature of the concept of Christian virginity, placed between existing notions of chastity, bodily integrity, and religious commitment, and the newly imported Christian notion of religious virginity. However, by using the character *tong* 童, the missionaries underscored the unique importance of the virgin body for Christianity and also clearly distinguished Christian virgins from Confucian chaste widows, elevating the former to a divinely inspired, and thus higher, form of chastity.²⁶

Christian Virginité and Fuan Women

Until the early 1700s, Fuan women learned about the lives of European nuns and holy women from sermons. In 1671 Varo observed that such *exempla* fascinated a few devout girls, who asked to follow the Western

26. The virginity of Mary (indicated by the terms *tongshen* and *tongzhen*) had been already mentioned in the Creed, translated in the initial period of the mission, as well as in early catechisms in the 1610s. The word *tongshen* 童身 for “virginity,” however, does not appear in ancient Chinese texts (pre-Qin philosophers and the Thirteen Classics) or in the dynastic histories, although the expression was used in vernacular texts, especially in relation to religious rituals. As far as the Mindong materials are concerned, the compound *tongzhenshen* used by Qing officials does not seem to appear in Christian written texts; other Christian and governmental Chinese sources called *beatas* with a variety of names: *zhennü* 貞女 (chaste women), *xiaozhen* 小貞 (small chaste [women]), *tongzhen* 童貞 (virgins), *tongshen* 童身 (virgins), *tongzhenshen* 童貞身 (virgins), *shoutongzhen* 守童貞 or *shoutongshen* 守童身 (persons who keep virginity), *xiudao* 修道 (persons who cultivate virtue or the Dao), or even *shengnü* 聖女 (holy women). Some terms (*zhennü*, *tongzhen*, *tongshen*, *shengnü*, and *xiudao*) were currently used in Chinese; others (*shoutongzhen*; *shoutongshen*) were coined by missionaries and Christians and replicated in Christian sources and in Qing documents about the Christians. Common words such as *shinü* 室女, *guinü* 閨女, or *chunü* 處女 (all meaning “girl still living at home”) were used in China to indicate a virgin but did not connote the explicit bodily associations of the Christian terms and were rarely used in Catholic texts. For details on Catholic and Chinese ideas of virginity and Chinese-Christian terminology about virginity, see Menegon 2004.

exemplars' path of virginity and dedication to God. The stories of the Western saints not only resonated with the experience of the young women in Fuan but also inspired their course of action, as an examination of the vocational stories of the first generation of *beatas* confirms.²⁷

These women initially encountered strong familial and societal oppositions to their desire to remain virgin. Varo, for example, relates the experience of three *beatas* whose fathers were non-Christian literati. The first, Petronilla Chen 陳 (ca. 1625–1710s) from Xiapei, was forced to marry her betrothed. After several months of resistance to marital intercourse in the house of the groom, however, she was divorced and left free to engage in religious life. In another instance, Lucia Miao 繆 in Muyang for three years resisted familial pressure to marry and the beatings of her father. Her steadfastness was such that he finally relented, converted, and at his death left his daughter land to support herself. Finally, Catalina Guo 郭 had a similar experience, suffering the opposition of her father but finally winning him over through her firm refusal to marry and her prayers.²⁸ Even when a family was Christian and supportive of their daughter's desire to be *beata*, notable tension with the family of the betrothed could still arise, as happened to Maria Miao in Muyang.

The struggles of these young Christian women bear striking resemblance to the accounts of the lives of Christian virgins from the West, which the Chinese women learned about from exemplary hagiographies, such as those contained in the extensive volume by the Jesuit Alfonso Vagnone, *Lives of Saints* (*Shengren xingshi* 聖人行實, Hangzhou, 1629; Fuzhou, 1631). Their new baptismal names reminded *beatas* of their new identity, since they were christened with the names of famous virgins and martyrs (Petronilla, Lucia, Agatha, Agnes, Ursula), of nuns

27. Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 178, mentions that Fuan women "heard about the lives of some women saints we were preaching to them." In a discussion of the *beatas* of Lima in the seventeenth century, Iwasaki (1993, 77) observes that chivalric and theological literature were also important sources of inspiration in the vocation of these women: "Feminine dissidence was possible through readings not only of 'profane' literature (chivalric literature), but much more through the readings of mystics and theologians, and the life of saints, especially female mystics like Catherine of Siena. The writings of Fr. Luis de Granada, for example, were attacked by Melchior Cano in 1559 because Granada 'wished to make everybody into contemplatives and teach the common people what is not for them.'"

28. Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 178.

(Teresa of Avila), or of professed lay women (Luisa de Carvajal, Rosa of Lima, Catherine of Siena). Most of these saints had refused marriage in order to remain virgins dedicated to God and had incurred opposition from their families. In particular, the semilegendary virgins and martyrs of the early church had often refused to follow the obligations of their noble status in order to remain virgins. Lucia, for example, a third-century young woman from Syracuse, consecrated her virginity to God and decided to hand over her properties to the poor. Unwillingly betrothed to a patrician, she refused marriage, was denounced by him to the authorities, and suffered martyrdom. Some of the Western namesakes of the *beatas* had lived in relatively recent times. Catherine of Siena (1347–80), for instance, was the most famous member of the Dominican Third Order, and her deeds as a virgin of God were so exceptional that she was proclaimed a saint by 1461, a few decades after her death. Teresa of Avila (1515–82), one of the greatest Spanish mystics, entered the convent of the Carmelites of Avila in secret to escape her father's initial opposition.²⁹

Among the recent saints, the Dominicans singled out Rosa of Lima (1586–1617; canonized in 1671) as a special example to the Fujianese *beatas*, and in 1706 Francisco González de San Pedro published in

29. The names of Fuan *beatas* can be found, e.g., in AMEP, vol. 436, f. 137 (YQTW, doc. 34, 139); GM, 1: 364 and 2: 210, 533. The literature on the virgin saints mentioned here (especially on Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila) is enormous. For a précis of their lives, I consulted the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (CE), under their respective names. Vagnone's ponderous *Lives of Saints* (Hangzhou, 1629, 420 pp., Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Chinois* 6693) contains biographies of twelve holy virgins (*tongshen*; *juan* 6) and twelve chaste widows (*shou jie*, *juan* 7). These two categories of women exhausted all the female saints in the collection. The remaining 51 saints are men, none included specifically under the rubric "virgin" (but rather apostles, clergy, martyrs, members of active religious orders, contemplative monks, and hermits). The categorization of women, unlike men, by their sexual and marital status illustrates the centrality of bodily purity to the version of female spirituality promoted by the Catholic Church. Vagnone's book was completed in 1624 in Macau, during his exile in the wake of the 1616 Nanjing anti-Christian campaign; thus the collection is certainly based on published Western-language hagiographies of saints readily available in Macanese conventual libraries. First published in Hangzhou in 1629 (see Bernard 1945, 337, 343), it was republished, possibly in installments, in the early 1630s in Fuzhou (cf. Bernard 1945, 344, no. 188, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Chinois* 6695 and 6697, both incomplete copies, the latter being a copy of *juan* 6 on virgins alone, dated 1632), thus assuring its diffusion among Christians in Fujian province.

Fuzhou a full-length account of her life in Chinese, entitled *Deeds of Saint Rosa of Lima*.³⁰ The biographical details of Rosa's life seemed especially relevant. Respectful and thrifty, always engaged in domestic work as a child, she read the life of St. Catherine and decided to follow her as a model. She fasted, added bloody penances to her daily prayer routine, and finally cut her hair, wore coarse clothing, and roughed her hands with domestic chores, activities that earned her the ridicule of friends and family. When she decided to take the vow of virginity, she faced the fierce anger of her parents, who were set on marrying her off. She struggled with them, patiently but inexorably, for ten years, until both they and her suitors relented. Fasting was followed by perpetual abstinence from meat and a diet of the coarsest food, barely sufficient to keep her alive. Charitable and industrious at home, where she made lace and embroideries to support her family, she finally locked herself as a recluse in a cell with the permission of her confessor, and at age twenty she joined the Dominican Third Order. Her brief life was spent praying for the extinction of idolatry in her native Peru, the conversion of sinners, and salvation of the souls of purgatory.³¹

Rosa's early years closely resembled the travails that Fuan *beatas* were likely to face: family opposition to their refusal of marriage and harassment from suitors.³² Moreover, the ingredients of Rosa's road to sanctity were similar to those found in Petronilla Chen's and her sisters' biographies: prayer, works of charity, penance, fasting, abstention from meat, and wearing of coarse clothes. The Chinese version of Rosa's life, however, was adapted for the intended local audience. An examination of

30. The Chinese version is probably based on the first hagiography written about Rosa, Leonardo Hansen's *Vita mirabilis et mors pretiosa venerabilis sororis Rosae de Sa. Mariae Limensis* (The extraordinary life and precious death of the venerable sister Rosa of Santa Maria from Lima), Rome, 1664, or on later versions inspired by it. For accuracy, in my translations I compared González de San Pedro 1920 and 1706b.

31. See CE, vol. 13, E. Aymé, "Saint Rosa."

32. Popular versions of Rosa's story highlighted the rejection of suitors. An eighteenth-century Peruvian popular painting of Santa Rosa, for example, shows her being beaten by her parents and harassed by a suitor; see figure 14 in Mujica Pinilla 1995, an essay analyzing the anti-matrimony elements in Rosa's life. For an anthropological and literary analysis of St. Rosa's cult in Peru, see Millones 1993; on Rosa's iconography, see Mujica Pinilla 2001. For hagiographic parallels in the Chan Buddhist tradition, see Grant 2009.

the sections in Rosa's Chinese hagiography describing her filiality toward her parents (*Luosa xiao qin* 羅洒孝親) and her entrance into the Third Order (*Luosa ru hui* 羅洒入會), for example, shows the translator's attempt to reconcile the tension between filial piety toward one's parents and a religious calling to perpetual virginity. The dramatic cutting of the hair at an early age is mentioned in the section on Rosa's childhood: "Desiring to remain virgin until her death and to maintain her purity intact (*quan qi jiejing* 全其潔淨), in imitation of Saint [Catherine] she cut off her hair. The first reason for this was to prevent her parents from marrying her off (*wei fumu bu quan jia* 爲父母不勸嫁); the second reason was because . . . beautiful hair is harmful" (hair was viewed as a demonic net used to attract men and plunge them into hell).³³

Despite this early commitment to virginity and her refusal to marry in defiance of social conventions and of her parents' desires, Rosa is depicted as unquestionably filial to her father and mother. She is abused by her relatives and especially her mother but happily agrees to all kinds of painful chores while following her religious vocation. Parental authority is outwardly respected but at the same time subtly undermined. God inspires Rosa to remain a virgin, but it is a local spiritual advisor who confirms the legitimacy of her choice. And since "the will of the priest is the will of the Lord of Heaven" (*shenfu yi shi Tianzhu yi*, 神父意是天主意), the "spiritual father" (*shenfu*) becomes the true authority, a mirror-image of the position of the Dominicans vis-à-vis the Fuan *beatas*. A Chinese reader may have felt some unease at this overturning of filial piety, and the translator tried to soften it by observing that, through her submission, Rosa was able to "listen to the orders of her parents and also listen to the orders of the priest [advising her to remain a virgin]." But this cosmetic attempt is nullified by expressions like the following: "Sometimes the orders of a mother and the will of Jesus are at odds."³⁴

This ambivalence continues in González de San Pedro's treatment of marriage. When Rosa's parents express their intention to marry her off despite her early vows of chastity, the translator comments:

Marriage is the great basis of the Five Relationships and a grave matter both for the body and the spirit. Therefore, according to the Holy Teachings, it is nec-

33. González de San Pedro 1920, 4.

34. Ibid.

essary to wait for the permission of the daughter, and only then is it possible to celebrate it. Rosa knew well the intentions of her parents, and she felt very sad in her heart. She wished that the Lord allowed her to remain virgin, but she respected her parents very much and thus did not dare to speak clearly.³⁵

Rosa's silence, however, did not mean that she had abandoned her (or better, in the spirit of the hagiography, God's) plans. She eventually succeeded, thanks to divine intervention, in continuing on her path to holiness. But the Chinese text by González de San Pedro fails to dissolve the tension between *xiao* and *tongzhen/tongshen*. The concluding description of Rosa's struggle with her family over marriage is again phrased in ambiguous terms:

Although her relatives said [Rosa] lacked filiality (*bu xiao* 不孝), in fact she was filial at the utmost (*zhi xiao* 至孝). But the will of the Lord of Heaven ordains people's lives, and Jesus clearly wished Rosa to be a virgin (*shou tongzhen* 守童貞). A priest then advised her to follow the will of the Lord, and she completely followed it. The ultimate filiality is accomplished by following a good order, not an evil one. Why appease one's parents, when one is contravening the decrees of the Supreme Lord? However, sometimes there are girls who, using the excuse of the will of the Lord of Heaven, erroneously presume to resist marriage (*shi pi bu ken jia* 恃僻不肯嫁). A look at [the life of] Rosa will show how different they are [from her model].³⁶

Here González de San Pedro paid lip service to the institution of marriage and promoted instead the idea that the utmost form of filiality was to obey the Lord's order to remain virgin in defiance of parental wishes. As they had done for ancestral rituals, the Dominicans were again unambiguously introducing a reformed concept of filial piety. In the end, in spite of his attempts to appease societal conventions, the Dominican compiler of the hagiography left the potentially disruptive elements of the story of Rosa untouched. The author's preface clearly suggests that anybody could aspire to Rosa's path: "Virtue in male and female saints is not innate, and the Lord of Heaven has decided to send the spiritual strength to achieve it to everybody who sincerely determines to set on that road. A holy master . . . said: 'If we act as the saints did, we all can become saints.'"³⁷ This text thus opened up a possibility of redefining the parameters of filial piety for local women. This

35. Ibid., 10.

36. Ibid., 10-11.

37. Ibid., "Xiaoyin" 小引, 1.

“reformed” idea of female filial piety, although undermining important premises of the patriarchal order, became acceptable in Fuan thanks to its endorsement by Christian literati, trained in the Confucian tradition and invested in the dominant social order.³⁸

Fuan Christian Literati and the Defense of Christian Virginité vs. Confucian Chastité

Obviously, the main beneficiaries of the printed biography of Rosa were literate *beatas*, who could in turn expound the contents of the volume to their illiterate sisters. The book was also, however, part of a strategy to legitimize their religious choice of perpetual celibacy both to the larger social arena and inside the local Christian community. The preface to the *Deeds of Saint Rosa*, written by the Fuan Christian literatus Wang Daoxing, reveals how a convert, educated in the Confucian classics and the holder of an official degree in the late Kangxi period, saw the *exemplum* of the Peruvian virgin.³⁹

Wang first mentioned the *exempla* found in “Confucian” histories of the inner chambers (*guishi* 閨史). Virtuous and chaste widows were

38. Interestingly, unlike the Dominicans in China, church authorities in Spain and Latin America did not endorse the institution of the *beatas*, since they considered it an offshoot of the heretical movement of the *alumbrados*. For example, Iwasaki (1993) notes that the movement of the *beatas* of Lima in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was condemned by the church, with the exception of St. Rosa of Lima. Using the records of the Inquisition of Lima kept in the Spanish National Archives in Madrid, Iwasaki illustrates not only how these women tried to establish some sort of independence from the patriarchy, but also how they became victims of their confessors and spiritual advisors, especially Dominicans and Jesuits. Their stories are very similar to that of Rosa, but for some reason she was chosen as a saint by the church, whereas the other *beatas* were persecuted by the Inquisition.

39. Wang Daoxing, zi Yangshu 養淑 or Yangzhi 養之, was one of the collators of Raymundo del Valle's *Xingsheng shiyi*. A native of Muyang and a member of the Lufeng 蘆峰 Wang lineage, he earned an *en-gongsheng* 恩貢生 degree in the late Kangxi period. His brother Wang Daosheng was also a Christian, as were his cousins Wang Daoya (educational intendant in Fujian; see FAXZ, 344) and Wang Daoshu 王道淑, all degree-holders. Daoxing wrote prefaces not only to González de San Pedro's *Shengnü Luosa xingshi* (1706) but also to the same author's *Shengjiao cuoyao* (1706). Both prefaces are dated KX 45.10 (November–December 1706). For information on Wang Daoxing, see FAXZ, 343, and the recently re-edited “Genealogy of the Wang of Lufeng” (蘆峰王氏宗譜, 2000; genealogical data courtesy Zhang Xianqing).

known to have cut their hair to show fidelity to their deceased husbands, to have spun thread to support their mothers-in-law, or to have lived in such abject poverty that they had to use reeds to teach their sons to write. Others had not shied away from cooking pieces of their flesh to save their in-laws (a reference to the practice of *gegu* 割股, the medical use of one's flesh to cure sick relatives). Wang concluded his list of examples by rhetorically asking: "Which one of [these women] failed to demonstrate personal integrity in facing adversity and to show her virtue? Their virtuous conduct was sufficient to maintain high morals among the people and to encourage good customs. . . . Their fame spread wide, and which one of them would fail to be called in this country outstanding among women?" His reply, however, was rather shocking. These women were not true heroines:

Although their chaste conduct was exceptional, it still sprang from their own impetuous nature (*benxing jilie* 本性激烈). What they did, they might have done in search of empty worldly fame. Even if they faced difficulties or lost their lives, they merely inflicted pain on themselves in vain. In fact, their motives were not true, and if we trace their original motivations, [we will find out that] they had no path [to follow], and this for no other reason that they did not know the Lord who gave origin to the world.⁴⁰

Wang thus criticized the cult of chastity as a race for fame. In this he echoed other Qing-period commentators and even emperors. Critics had reproved gentry families for soliciting excessive honors for their own faithful widows as a way to enhance their prestige in local society. But for the most part these objections went unheeded, and the Qing period in fact saw an unprecedented explosion of the cult of widow fidelity. In Fujian, as elsewhere, a large number of chaste widows were commemorated in local gazetteers. In the 1884 Fuan gazetteer, for example, three *juan* are dedicated to hundreds of chaste and virtuous widows. Among them some are praised for having committed suicide after their betrothed or husbands had died (especially under the categories *zhenlie* 貞烈, "heroic chaste widows," and *jiexiao* 節孝, "chaste and filial widows").⁴¹

40. Both quotations from Wang Daoxing, preface, 3, in González de San Pedro 1920.

41. On critiques of the chastity cult, see T'ien 1988, 126–28. For biographies of exemplary women in Fuan, see FAXZ, 474–556.

And yet Wang Daoxing, sidestepping the issue of marriage and concentrating on heroic virginity, found that “the virtuous women of our country pale in comparison” with the saints of the West, in particular St. Rosa:

If we consult the records of the canonical histories of the Western countries, [we will find that] not only are there exceptional men who exercised [the virtue of] virginity (*lixu tongzhen* 勵修童貞), renouncing the world and offering their lives in great numbers, but also that among women there are widows who remained chaste (*gua er zhen zhe* 寡而貞者), and many more who remained chaste since childhood (*tong er zhen zhe* 童而貞者). In order to obey the will of the Great Lord, such women would rather renounce the pleasures of the world and enjoy the pains of the world in the hope of obtaining eternal happiness after death. But they did not do it in the least merely for fame.

Wang not only underlined the element of self-renunciation and suffering in the story of Rosa but also noticed how she fulfilled the imperatives of Confucian virtue:

In serving her parents, she was very obedient, and this indicates that she was filial (*xiao* 孝), giving an example to the world. Being content with her lot, she distributed [her money], and she always took care of the poor and the sick. This means she was able to practice the virtue of humanity (*ren* 仁) in order to hold steadfast [on the path of virtue]. She was capable of withstanding (*ren* 忍) the sorrows she experienced; she had many virtues, but still she was modest (*qian* 謙). . . . She decided to remain virgin (*tongzhen* 童貞), without any doubt on her part. . . . Does this just spring out of an impetuous nature, bent on gaining empty fame from the world?

In other words, Rosa and, by extension, the Chinese Christian women following her example were not just the embodiment of female Confucian virtue but in fact a superior version of such virtue unavailable to non-Christian Chinese women. Wang saw the publication of González de San Pedro's translation as a way “to let people know that there are weak women who still can be virtuous and pure (*dunxiu chunjie* 敦修純潔).” González de San Pedro had proclaimed the path of sanctity undertaken by the *beatas* open to all. Wang, more prudently, suggested at the end of his preface the difficulty of such path but fundamentally endorsed the decision to remain virgins by professed members of the Third Order in Mindong.⁴²

42. Quotations are from Wang Daoxing, preface, 3–4, in González de San Pedro 1920.

In sum, the examples of Saint Rosa and other holy virgins not only were rife with possibilities to subvert the patriarchal model of filial piety but also represented a critique of the cult of widow chastity, in the opinion of Fuan Christians. In spite of this critique, however, the cult of chastity in fact might have favored the acceptance of Christian virginity. Even if it was based on quite different values, the vows of *beatas* to remain virgins located them in the same discourse of virtue inhabited by chaste widows. This sheltered them from attacks and eased social opposition in the local arena over time.

Social Life of the Beatas Between Opposition and Incentives

The story of Saint Rosa and the experiments by friars and literati with new interpretations of filiality, chastity, and virginity, together with pre-existing notions of religious celibacy, supplied the intellectual and spiritual fodder that nourished the vocation of the Fuan *beatas*. But, if the discursive elements of the European and Chinese traditions mustered to legitimize the *beatas*' choice had not been accompanied by other, more tangible incentives, it is doubtful that by the Qianlong reign over 300 local women would have joined the ranks of the Third Order, facing, and ultimately winning, a battle against the strictures of patriarchal rules.

There were indeed multiple incentives—material, psychological, and spiritual—for embracing a religious life. Yet, in order to become a *beata*, a young woman had to face fierce opposition from family, local society, and the state. Riccio left this description of the hostile atmosphere initially experienced by the *beatas* within their families and local society in the late Ming and early Qing period and of the obstacles they encountered:

The unfaithful saw that among Christians there were *doncellas* who did not need to beg for alms but, on the contrary, were rather rich heiresses and rather beautiful and graceful. . . . In spite of this, [these women] vowed to keep chaste, avoiding forever engagement or marriage. [Gentiles] thought that this was a way to secretly live in laxity (*anchura*), and even [to live in laxity] with those who had permitted or persuaded them to do so [i.e., the friars]. Thus, not for a few days but for many years there were rumors, until the Divine Majesty clearly showed the purity and virtue [of those women], and

the gentiles were edified, and Christians were confirmed in their Catholic faith.⁴³

This passage illustrates the three main reasons for familial and societal opposition. The most prominent was obviously the girls' refusal to become engaged and marry. Even Christian families showed great displeasure at the prospect of their young women abandoning a good marriage for a life of religious dedication and celibacy. Genealogies forcefully condemned the men and women who left their households in order to join a religious order. One such rule stated that children "are not reared by their parents to become monks and nuns."⁴⁴

A second reason was the suspicion that foreign missionaries were preying sexually on local women. In Fuan, anxiety over alleged sexual predations by the clergy took a public form in 1644, as we saw in Chapter 2, when local lineage leaders organized a large anti-Christian parade including impersonations of pregnant "Christian virgins." On that occasion masked men dressed as friars mocked the spiritual relationship between priests and *beatas*, lasciviously touching the female impersonators and telling them "My daughter, no matter how big your pregnant belly is, do not worry, as what you have there has been conceived by the Holy Ghost!"

The third preoccupation was that the Christian virgins "lived in laxity" with the foreign priests of their own will, a perception that incidentally corresponded with the polemical Confucian image of young Buddhist nuns as "sexually promiscuous girls who did not take their vows seriously." Again, the 1644 anti-Christian parade graphically illustrated this concern. In the parade a man in drag, representing a beautiful young woman, refused the advances of local suitors only to embrace a foreign priest who was telling her "you will become a *beata* and will be mine, and nobody else's. I have come for you all the way from faraway Europe, daring so many dangers and seas!" This parody reminds us of Xu Dashou's concerns for the inversion of *yin* and *yang*: women were no longer only potential victims of clerical plotting but also active and full participants in illicit relationships that defied the orthodox imperative of marriage.⁴⁵

43. RH, ff. 161r-v.

44. Hui-chen Wang Liu 1959, 94-95.

45. First quotation on Buddhist nuns from Mann 1997, 192, referring to the *Dream of the Red Chamber*; second quotation from RH, f. 161v.

Beatas, facing the wrath of the state, suffered repeated arrests and ultimately ineffective injunctions to forced marriage in the wake of the Yongzheng and Qianlong eras' anti-Christian campaigns in Fuan. Especially in the mid-Qing period, state authorities intervened with great determination to support the institution of matrimony and, by generally discouraging ordinations of young girls, to undo the damage they thought religious celibacy inflicted on that sacred bond. In Fujian and elsewhere, local officials frowned on the phenomenon of the "purchase" of poor girls, who were recruited into the Buddhist monastic system at a very young age. In 1688, the governor of Fujian (presumably Zhang Zhongju 張仲舉), for example, requested that all Buddhist nuns under the age of 30 be returned to their families of origin. With this action, the governor was likely trying to inject back in the marriage market a number of available brides in a period of demographic recovery for the coastal region. Similarly, in the early eighteenth century, another governor of Fujian, Zhang Boxing, forbade Christianity and also ordered that daughters sold by their families to become Buddhist nuns be redeemed and married off. Again, in the early Qianlong period, governors responded to imperial regulation of the Buddhist and Daoist monastic establishment first issued during the Yongzheng era by ordering that young female novices, on reaching the age of twenty, be returned to their families and lineages to be married off and that in the future women could enter a nunnery only after reaching the age of 40. The similar policy of forced marriage applied to Christian virgins thus clearly fit within this broader campaign to reform local customs in alliance with lineages.⁴⁶

In spite of the war that families, lineages, and the state waged against *beatas*, however, these young women maintained their resolve to embrace religious life. This chapter opened with the story of Maria Miao and her trials, but missionary sources recount other stories of even greater conflict within families. The most celebrated among the early *beatas* was

46. On the 1688 decision, see Vermeer 1990, 129, citing a local history of Putian by Chen Hong 陳鴻 (1618–98), *Xichao Pujing xiaoji* 熙朝莆靖小紀, covering the period 1684–97; the governor's name can be found in *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*, 2: 1553. On Zhang Boxing's policies on nuns in Fujian, see Spence 1992, 127. On the minimum age to join a nunnery, see a 1736 memorial by Hubei Governor Zhongbao 鍾保, quoting a statute of the Qing Code: "Henceforth women must be older than 40 to become nuns" (*Lishi dang'an* 2001, 35). On the failure of Fuan officials to force the marriage of *beatas* in the 1770s, see GH, 2: 521.

Petronilla Chen, a native of Xiapei, near Fuan. As a child, she had been a devout Buddhist who practiced fasting and followed a vegetarian diet. Through a concubine of her maternal grandfather, she learned about Christianity, and apparently she was instructed in the rudiments of the new faith by a Christian uncle, a Huang from Dingtou. She soon memorized the catechism, obtained baptism at age 11, and at age 18 took vows of chastity as a member of the Third Order. She continued her ascetic practices and refused to marry a young man whose wedding with her had been arranged years in advance by her father. Her family, non-Christian, at first tried to satisfy the household of the prospective groom with some money but finally forced her to marry. She started a long fast and then decided to cut off her hair and join a female cousin in a nearby village. The missionary attempted mediation: it was decided that she would go to the house of the groom for a wedding ceremony, stay eight days, and then leave forever. The plan failed, and Petronilla was detained by the household of the groom and beaten repeatedly over the next eight months. Joaquín Guo Bangyong tried to intervene to free her, but it was only through her stubborn refusal to give up her virginity and desperate acts, such as covering her body with excrement to avoid being harassed by the husband, that she finally was released. She then joined the friars in Dingtou, where she lived in a Christian household, since her parents refused to have any contact with her. We know that she continued to engage in her religious activities of prayer, penance, and catechization until at least the 1710s, since her death was commemorated in the 1720 provincial chapter of the Dominicans.⁴⁷

The story of Petronilla Chen's vocation may be one of the more dramatic—and famous—among those of the Mindong *beatas*. Her story reveals the commitment that she and the succeeding generations of *beatas* mustered in order to live the apparently more rewarding semi-cloistered life of single Christian virgins. The attraction of the *beatas'* lifestyle is

47. For biographical data on Petronilla Chen, see RH, ff. 161v–71v; AMEP, vol. 404, f. 81; and Capillas 1894, 61–66. The practice of deferred marriage here seems similar to what is described in a number of legal cases from Baxian 巴縣 county (Sichuan), in which married women were allowed to leave the husband's home “temporarily” following a marital crisis to return to their natal family, where they stayed thereafter (Philip Huang 2001, 22). Once married, refusal of consummation led to repudiation of the bride (Sommer 2000, 162). On other unorthodox patterns of delayed marriage and marriage resistance, mainly linked to economic factors in nineteenth-century Guangdong, see Topley 1975 and Stockard 1989.

shown by their gradual increase in numbers. By 1671, in Fuan there were 12 *doncellas* from prominent families such as the Miao, “who had offered their virginity to God with a vow of chastity.” By 1695, their number reached 24, varying in age between 18 and 72 years. In the eighteenth century, they became even more numerous. A 1735 document states that “there are so many women wishing the state of tertiaries of the Order, that there would be more religious than lay women, if we were to give [the habit to all of them].” The contemporary Chinese commentary to the rules of the Third Order by Royo (1741) also testifies to this continued increase, as do letters in the second half of the eighteenth century. Qing memorials set their number in 1746 at between 130 and 200.⁴⁸

The popularity is especially remarkable given the great pressure on women to marry in what has been termed by demographers the “marriage crunch” of late imperial China. Caused by an insufficient number of marriageable women, the marriage crunch was also felt during the prosperous High Qing period. In Mindong, particularly in Fuan, there were so few marriageable women between the late Ming and the High Qing that poor husbands sold or mortgaged their wives to other men. In 1746, local officials in Fujian dealing with regulation of the marriage market mentioned the two problems of pawning of wives and the Christian *beatas* in Funing prefecture; they recommended prohibition of the former practice as immoral and illegal and suggested the forced marriage of the *beatas* as a measure to decrease the shortage of brides. Even more remarkable is the fact that, unlike Buddhist nuns, most of whom were

48. See Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 177; AMEP, vol. 434, f. 7; GH, 2: 240n9, quoting Juan José de la Cruz y Moya (1706–60), “Narración histórica,” 1735. According to a 1714 memorial, the *beatas* of Mindong then numbered around 50, see GH, 2: 46; Royo, attrib., 1741 [Chinese], f. 4v, says: “Presently the religious people (*xiudao*) are many.” A 1755 letter of Simón Lo (Luo 羅) del Rosario (1728–61) refers to 33 professed *beatas* and novices in the region of Zhangzhou alone, see GH, 5: 352. A figure of 130 *beatas* is given in a 1746 vermilion-endorsed memorial by Fujian Provincial Surveillance Commissioner Gioro Yarhašan (QTS, vol. 1, doc. 68, 104, QL 11/8/2 [Sept. 16, 1746]); over 200 are mentioned in a contemporary memorial by Fujian Governor Zhou Xuejian (QTS, vol. 1, doc. 58, 88, QL 11/5/28 [July 16, 1746]). In 1756, Teradillos stated that “the number of *beatas* in Fogán is no fewer than 250, including novices and professed [sisters]” (GH, 2: 441n78). Another letter by Teradillos in 1760 states that “in this village of Muyang [alone] there are 80 *beatas*, and counting those in the other villages [of the region] of Fuan, there are more than 200” (GH, 2: 503–4n35). In a 1781 letter, José Muñoz confirms that “in the territory of Fuan there are many *beatas*” (GH, 2: 539–40).

recruited among the poor, the orphaned, or the elderly, *beatas* were overwhelmingly young elite women. For example, among the twelve *beatas* of Mindong between 1632 and 1671, eight were daughters of *shengyuan*, and two came from families with degree-holders in the previous two generations; only one was the daughter of poor parents. Although they were not the “learned women” of Jiangnan studied by Susan Mann (Mindong had few such women), clearly the choice of the Fuan *beatas* and their families contradicts the assertion that “no [elite] family allowed a promising young lady to escape marriage.”⁴⁹

It is important to underline that *beatas*, after an initial phase of conflict, received family consent and support to stay at home. Varo reported that these young women lived in their natal households, rigorously respecting the fasts, penances, and other mortifications of the Third Order of Penance, and that their parents or brothers gave them a special room (*aposenito aparte*) to practice their pious exercises. González de San Pedro confirmed in 1710 that “the professed [virgins live] . . . in the houses of their parents or relatives, except for a few older ones who reside in the women’s church for their own protection and neatness.” What thus differentiated them from tertiaries of strict observance in Europe was that they could not live in a community “due to the inconveniences that could derive from it,” in particular the difficulty of providing for their protection and guidance. The only serious attempt to create a *beaterío* in Dingtou in the late 1640s was thwarted by the destruction of the priory in 1651 at the hand of loyalist Southern Ming troops.⁵⁰

49. Quotation from Mann 1997, 10. The Qing code contained a statute against wife-pawning, a custom particularly common in south China. Husbands pawned their wives to other men for a certain amount of time, usually five to ten years, and then received them back. The target of such arrangements, regulated by contracts, was usually the production of a male heir for men married to barren wives; see Guo Songyi 2000, 486–98. On the situation of the marriage market in Fuan and Funing, see T’ien 1988, 30; and a report from the Xinghua prefect on the situation in Funing, in AMEP, vol. 434, ff. 1092–94 (YQTW, doc. 28.2, 62–64). On the humble social provenance of Buddhist nuns, see Mann 1997, 10; but one should notice that, especially in Jiangnan, a number of “eminent nuns” were of elite background, and emerged as respected religious leaders in lay circles and as abbesses of their communities; see Grant 2009. In a marginal region like Mindong, *shengyuan* and their daughters could already be considered members of the local elite; on the social standing of these women, see Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 178.

50. See González de San Pedro as quoted in GH, 2: 48n10. Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 177–79; cf. GH, 1: 297, quoting Navarrete, *Controversias*. On the *beaterío* in

In order to be able to sustain themselves financially, *beatas* needed the help of their families. Their parents not only allowed them to live at home but also provided a sort of “religious dowry” for them, similar to the one given nuns in Europe. This was a prerequisite for admission to religious life. A 1796 report from an MEP missionary in Xinghua (Fujian) confirms this fact, since poverty prevented young girls in that locale from following their vocation. A Dominican also observed that “we have always made sure in our missions that those who want to live as *beatas* have enough to support themselves, so that they might lead a decorous and exemplary life.” Even relatively poor families would give up the bride price “with which the parents usually sustain themselves” and keep their daughters at home as tertiaries.⁵¹

In exchange, *beatas* worked with their hands at home “to support themselves and to avoid laziness,” possibly a reference to embroidery and other domestic work. Moreover, although the Ming and Qing inheritance laws did not contemplate that daughters could inherit, it appears that some families started leaving substantial portions of household property to *beatas*. For example, Teresa Guo Quanshi “divided with the other *beatas* the considerable estate that her parents left her, reserving to herself only a small fraction, sufficient for her sustenance.” The Christian father of the *beata* Teresa Yan, from Houban (Zhangzhou), also left her some land for support. This “Christian anomaly” to the customary and dynastic laws of inheritance was based on a newly acquired sense of obligation among Christian families to support their *beatas*. Being unprotected by law, the property of these women could still be taken by their relatives; for example, the land owned by Teresa Yan was eventually seized by “her evil brother . . . , who said that in this kingdom the daughters do not inherit from the fathers. He left his poor sister to support herself through labor.”⁵²

Dingtou, see GH, 1: 291, quoting RH; later on, Magino Ventallol established a *beaterío* in Zhangzhou (GH, 2: 227).

51. See a 1796 letter of Michel-Charles Lolivier MEP (1764–1833), in AMEP, vol. 439, f. 443; GH, 2: 242, quoting de la Cruz y Moya, “Narración histórica”; and 1710 report by González de San Pedro as quoted in GH, 2: 48n10.

52. See José Calvo in GH, 2: 538–39; and GH, 2: 242, quoting Juan José de la Cruz y Moya, “Narración histórica.” In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Franciscan friars in northern Shandong devised a complex contractual procedure to ensure that local Christian virgins would be endowed with property, unalienable even after the death of their parents; see Tiedemann 2008. Scholars have argued, however, that the dowry of married women can be considered a form of inheritance;

These economic considerations show that with time this Christian institution became accepted within the fabric of normal family life. In Fuan, relatives not only supported the *beatas* in their homes but even bent the customary inheritance laws and accepted the economic loss of the bride price. This phenomenon, once more, illustrates the gradual process of entrenchment and “normalization” of Christianity in Mindong and its potential for weakening the grip of patriarchal institutions over women’s lives.

Religious Life of the Beatas: Opportunities

Families’ willingness to support *beatas* indicates the dramatic improvement of their public image between the mid-seventeenth and the eighteenth century. By the 1670s Varo noted that *beatas*, after encountering much opposition from their families at the beginning of the mission, by then were living “in utmost peace, without any impediment disturbing their religious exercises.”⁵³ Since their vocation was increasingly understood as conforming to both Confucian and Christian orthodox expectations of moral behavior, families started seeing these unmarried daughters as a badge of honor. In 1710 González de San Pedro observed that initially these young women had suffered for their “choice of being Christian and not marrying, something that is considered very shameful in China and against all their laws and customs.” However “with time and their exemplary life, they made themselves so esteemed and venerated that not only Christians prized a daughter who was among the tertiaries or who desired to join . . . , but even some gentiles venerated and revered them much, and some [of these gentiles], whose daughters belonged to this state, thought highly of them.”⁵⁴ The increased acceptance may have been connected to the rising concern for female chastity and correct female behavior in the eighteenth century, as mentioned above. Although refusal of marriage was obviously heterodox, the fact that the lifestyle of the *beatas* approximated that of chaste widows probably worked in their favor.⁵⁵

see, e.g., Chung-min Chen 1992. On daughters and Ming-Qing inheritance laws, see Bernhardt 1995 and 1999, chap. 1.

53. Varo 1671, in Arias 1893, 177–79.

54. González de San Pedro as quoted in GH, 2: 48n10.

55. For a summary of scholarship on the Qing development of the ideal of female chastity, see Theiss 1998, 29–30. Theiss (30) observes that in the Qing there

To the *beatas*, the consecrated life also offered novel opportunities for carving out a more independent space of spiritual and social growth than marriage or widowhood and for following a lifestyle that combined “orthodox” and “heterodox” elements in a unique way. The strong pull of religious life felt by Mindong Christian women is underscored by the rather young age of the novices. The long probation they had to undergo, moreover, indicates the planning and meditation behind their choice. Both to avoid accusations of impropriety and to eliminate the risk that novices would be married off by their parents, by the eighteenth century only candidates who had reached the age of 30 were allowed to take the official vows as professed tertiaries. In fact, the Dominican superiors repeatedly suggested that the age of admittance be raised to 40, the same age suggested by Qing officials for Buddhist nuns. Despite this age restriction, however, starting at age 13 girls could in fact express a desire to join the order and begin following the religious routine of the professed sisters. These young candidates were allowed to keep and comb their long hair and to wear earrings. Although they could not yet use the habit of the professed sisters, they were encouraged to dress simply. If by age 25 a candidate was still unmarried and committed to her vocation, she entered an official probationary period. Upon verification of good religious conduct, she would invariably be admitted to the profession at age 30. A Qing memorial reports that at that stage *beatas* wore “coarse clothes,” and an early description of their habit mentions a simple cotton dress, short hair, and a veil; silk dresses and jewelry were forbidden. Women deemed to possess outstanding virtue could be admitted earlier. But girls who expressed a desire to join the ranks of the *beatas* only after being betrothed were discouraged from joining, for fear that they might balk at the rigors of religious discipline. At the moment of profession as full-fledged *beatas*, all candidates took vows of perpetual chastity.⁵⁶

was a “permeation of everyday life with concerns about chastity which was no longer understood to be a heroic virtue, but was instead associated with newly rigorous norms of behavior expected of all women.”

56. On the attire of *beatas*, see memorial by Fujian-Zhejiang Governor-General Martai, QL 11/6/1 (July 18, 1746): “The virgins wear coarse clothing”; RH, ff. 228v–33r; cf. GH, 1: 223–25; and José Calvo in GH, 2: 539. On the risk of marriage for young candidates to the Third Order, see letter of José Muñoz, September 3, 1781, in GH, 2: 539–40; on the proposal to raise the limit to 40 years of age for admit-

Religious life for the *beatas* of Mindong was based on a set of spiritual and disciplinary rules. They engaged in spiritual readings and mental prayer in their domestic cells, rising at midnight to recite the rosary and other prayers from the available Chinese prayer books. They engaged also in “penances”: they abstained from meat, in some cases for life; they ate only once a day, at noon; and they fasted at the times appointed by the liturgical calendar and avoided forbidden foods. They participated with their sisters or other women in common rituals, and they received religious instruction through sermons from the missionaries.

Their life entailed not only prayer and study but also educational and charitable responsibilities. They often led other women in religious exercises, when the priest was not available, and had an important role in educating women in the faith, both in their families and outside, as this passage illustrates:

[*Beatas*] take care of persuading the non-Christian women to follow the Law of God, of catechizing them, and instructing them in the mysteries of the faith if they wish to be baptized. They teach the Christian girls and women the holy fear of God, the Christian doctrine, and the way to aptly prepare for the sacraments. Their care is such, and their benefit [to the community] is so great that usually there are many more and better Christian women where one of these young virgins resides than where there is none.⁵⁷

The educational role of *beatas* was sustained by literacy, probably gained by some of them in their natal families. Sources indicate that they could read prayer books and devotional texts, particularly the lives of saints. A book that all probably read or had read to them was the *Deeds of St. Rosa of Lima*, which presented for emulation the ideal regime of penance and charity exemplified by the life of this Latin American tertiary and saint. We do not know whether they could also write with ease. As I discuss below, they sent a letter to a convent of nuns in France, although the text could have been written on their behalf by others. But *beatas* certainly did receive and read correspondence, as testified by a letter that a Dominican wrote to the *beatas* Lucia and Ana Zhao around 1748.⁵⁸

tance, see letter of Francisco Serrano, Qidong, February 13, 1739, in GM, 2: 112–13. For rules of probation, see Royo, attrib., 1741 [Chinese], ff. 4v–5r.

57. González de San Pedro as quoted in GH, 2: 48n10.

58. See Chinese-language letter of Juan Alcober to Ana and Lucia Zhao, in Archivum Generale Ordinis Praedicatorum, Rome, X 2571, unmarked envelope. Al-

Beatas not only engaged in personal spiritual cultivation but also in charitable activities, such as running a leper hospice for women in Fuan county and visiting the sick in their homes. Some of them developed medical skills. In Dingtou Petronilla Huang, for example, could cure small children of “wind disease” (“mal del viento”; possibly *fengbing* 風病, a general term used for seizures and paralyses) with acupuncture applied to their joints, and many non-Christians would ask for her services. This in turn allowed her to baptize dying infants, either openly or sometimes secretly.⁵⁹

Beatas were subject to the authority of a prioress (*nǚhuizhang* 女會長), chosen by the Dominicans for her superior virtues and experience. According to the Third Order’s rules, drafted by the Dominicans in China, the prioress could act as recommender of young novices. The role of the prioress was to monitor the conduct of members both in relationship to the aims of the order and in daily life. She gathered the members once a month and expounded the rules and obligations of the order and in addition offered wider spiritual guidance. The famous prioress Teresa Guo Quanshi, for example, would often sit in a position of authority and read spiritual books to the younger *beatas* sitting on the

cober wrote the letter while awaiting capital execution in Fuzhou in 1747–48. He offered words of moral guidance to the two sisters and then wrote to Ana: “I have postponed for long your entrance into the Third Order, but if you can follow the rules and obey the Lord, when you die you will obtain the spiritual benefits of the Third Order, and all other words are useless.” The letter shows the intimate spiritual relation between priests and *beatas*, as well as the importance attached to formal membership in the Third Order.

59. On the leper hospices, see GM, 1: 287. According to the 1741 Royo list, reporting the situation before 1723, there were two Christian leper hospices in Fuan. One was located east of the village of Tangqiyang 棠溪洋, included a church dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, and cared for 13 Christian lepers, as well as for non-Christian patients. The other one was close to the neighborhood of Houlong 后壠, bordering the neighborhood of Guanpu, north of the walls of Fuan. The hospice had a church dedicated to St. Catherine and served 38 Christian lepers and other non-Christians. One was supervised by the missionaries and served men; the other, reserved for women, was run by local women tertiaries and *beatas*. The existence of these establishments is confirmed by a 1723 document sent by County Magistrate Fu Zhi to the governor, reporting the location of the hospices (*mafengyuan* 麻瘋院); see GH, 2: 284, 287; GM, 2: 287; and APSR, *China*, vol. 9, doc. 12a. Juan José de la Cruz y Moya, “Narración histórica” (1735), also refers to the ministry to infirm women offered by *beatas*; see GH, 2: 242. On *fengbing*, see *Hanyu da cidian*, 12: 610; on the baptism of infants, see GM, 2: 535.

ground, explaining to them the most difficult points. The prioress Petronilla Huang Jinshi (“Kin-say”) 黃金使 from Dingtou, active in the 1740s, was also “very well versed in the books of our [Christian] religion.” A prioress also had authority over the movements of *beatas* in her village of residence, and they had to secure permission to visit relatives and stay outside their apartments. Permission to travel between villages was reserved for the priest.⁶⁰

But the role of a prioress in the Christian village community extended to all kinds of affairs: she occasionally acted as a mediator in disputes between Christian families, exhorting them to avoid slander while discreetly censoring people’s faults. Again, Teresa Guo Quanshi, according to her necrology, “acted as mediator when any difference developed among Christians, solving them, and she was held in such respect and veneration that nobody in her presence dared to reply.” Even non-Christians, when in a bind, consulted the charismatic Petronilla Huang. Sometimes, however, this mediation activity caused tensions and splits in the community along household lines, and prioresses were called on by the missionaries to act very prudently.⁶¹

By the late seventeenth century, *beatas* acquired a group identity, as evident in a Chinese-language letter they wrote in 1695. The letter, today kept in Paris, was addressed to the Visitation Sisters of the French convent of Beaune in Côte d’Or (near Dijon, France).⁶² The *beatas’* new *esprit de corps* is displayed in an attachment, in which all the Chinese virgins gave their individual names. In spite of its ceremonious and humble tone, typical of Chinese polite correspondence, the document shows how these 24 Fuan women, young and elderly, all individually listed, felt connected to a universal body of religious women whom they saw as their “Elder Sisters in the Way” (*Dao zhang* 道長):

In the mountainous corner of this maritime district [of Fuan] the nature [of people] is brutish, and only few have been able to know the Lord of Heaven.

60. José Calvo, letter of November 1, 1772, as quoted in GH, 2: 538–39; letter of Juan Alcober, February 18, 1748, in GM, 2: 535.

61. See GH, 2: 538–39; GM, 2: 535; and Royo, attrib., 1741 [Chinese], ff. 4r–v.

62. The Visitation Sisters, established in France by the noblewoman Jean de Chantal and by Bishop Francis de Sales in the early seventeenth century, initially combined the two exercises of contemplation and service to the poor and sick women (the “visitation”). Later the social work component was abolished by bishops, and the sisters were cloistered; most of them were “well-bred” and came from the nobility; see McNamara 1996, 466–67.

To ask this of weak women is even more difficult. We are overwhelmed by the grace of the Lord, since we have only little faith. We learned that all of you "Elder Sisters in the Way" engage in venerable and pious deeds and are thus moved to love virtue. We are aware of the difference between you and us, but you still extended to us your love and charitably donated to us holy objects, a fact that moved our hearts to the utmost. Furthermore, you communicated to us the idea of the common intention of prayer, and how could we dare not to respect your orders? . . . We are just frail women, and we fear that we might have failed your love for us. We would like to receive the respected surnames and holy names of the Elderly Sisters in the Way. We hope that in this way we will not miss the overflowing grace of the communion of prayer of the Holy Church.⁶³

Although they declared themselves younger and inexperienced disciples of the French sisters, the Fuan *beatas* nevertheless thought of themselves as legitimately pursuing the *Dao*, in a way similar to their European counterparts. This pride and sense of purpose were shared by their families and extended beyond the boundaries of the Christian community. When in 1707 authorities seized and sealed the women's church of Fuan, and the *beatas* were ejected from the compound, local Christian women broke the seals and occupied the church in prayer, with the *beatas* leading. A missionary commented that officials had to refrain from further action, "because it is a very grave matter in China to persecute women, especially when they do things in common, which is something viewed as rather sacred." By the early eighteenth century, *beatas* had thus firmly achieved the status of leaders among the Christian women of Fuan. *Beatas* and other Christian women, like their peers engaging in Buddhist or Daoist pilgrimages and temple worship, were able to assert their *de facto* control of a female religious sphere and shield it from male interference by virtue of the sacredness that such religious activities commanded. Local society and even local officialdom had come to accept the institution of the *beatas* as a form of legitimate religious life in Mindong.⁶⁴

63. AMEP, vol. 429, ff. 81, 87 (duplicate copies). The French title of the Chinese document in the Launay manuscript catalogue of AMEP is: "Les religieuses de Fôgân hien aux Soeurs de la Visitation de Beaune. Remerciements et acceptation de la proposition d'union spirituelle transmise par M. Leblanc. Noms et age des religieuses." The most common surnames are Chen, Guo, and Miao.

64. See GH, 2: 67, quoting González de San Pedro, "Breve Relacion" (1707?); on the women's sacred sphere and its independence from state control, see Mann

Disobeying the Rules

The viable position earned by *beatas* in Fuan yielded new opportunities and liberties that troubled not only families, lineages, and the state but also the institutional church. The hybrid nature of their religious life, neither completely cloistered nor completely free, could in the eyes of the missionaries entail risks for the moral state of the *beatas*. As a Dominican observed, "In truth, among so much pure gold, there is also some fake gold." Some *beatas* were "degenerating from true sanctity," and by the mid-eighteenth century their increased numbers led to laxity in respecting the rules, with only a minority obeying them in their entirety.⁶⁵

Early on, the Dominicans had realized that religious life in China granted a greater degree of liberty to women than they would have had as mere wives. The friars found this opportunity a morally reprehensible phenomenon, and thus, paradoxically, they shared the Qing state's negative attitude toward monasteries and nuns, as we read in Riccio's chronicle:

In this kingdom there are many monasteries of nuns, whom they call *ni-ku* [i.e., *nigu* 尼姑]. They are not unmarried virgin girls, but rather widows, elderly women, or wives repudiated by their husbands. They take this road due to their great probity, and the gentiles give them alms that they use to sustain themselves. However, they do not have an appropriate way of life, since they live with much liberty, going out alone in the cities and towns, begging for alms. In this, as in most things, they are the opposite of Europeans, since our nuns live perpetually cloistered, and the lay women in liberty; but in China, the nuns are free, and all the others are kept in very strict reclusion.⁶⁶

This picture largely confirms the little we know about Buddhist monastic institutions for women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In a discussion of nunneries and laywomen's vegetarian halls in the

1997, 200. For a derogatory description by a male of women's religious activities and pilgrimages in the seventeenth century, nevertheless showing the autonomy and resistance of women to men in the religious arena, see Dudbridge 1992.

65. José Muñoz (1781), in GH, 2: 539; Royo, attrib., 1741 [Chinese], f. 4v: "Presently the religious [sisters] are many, and those who are strict in respecting the rules, as it turns out, have become a rarity, with possible negative consequences in the future."

66. RH, f. 161r.

late imperial period, Hill Gates observes that “the freedom of women who led such lives contrasted markedly with the housebound lives of ordinary women. Nuns were highly visible as they went about collecting for charity or performing at women’s funerals on unbound or let-out feet. Individual nuns were often well known regionally for their piety and for the freedom it gave them.”⁶⁷ Riccio found the lifestyle of Chinese nuns inappropriate and excessively free, a judgment that reveals the prejudices of the European age of “Great Confinement.” For the missionary, since Buddhist nuns were free to move around, unlike European nuns, they represented a potentially uncontrollable group, prone to misconduct. His opinion reflected the displeasure of Pope Urban VIII, who in 1631 regretted the liberty of certain unofficial congregations of women who “go freely everywhere without respect for the laws of the cloister under the pretext of working for the salvation of souls.”⁶⁸

At issue here was male control over women. When it came to exerting control over the *beatas*, the Dominicans shared the misogynist attitude of the Chinese state and of Chinese men. In fact, by the early Qianlong period they were appealing to the authority of the otherwise decried “Chinese ritual propriety” (*Zhongguo zhi li* 中國之禮) in order to limit the mobility of *beatas*:

According to Chinese ritual propriety, women do not exit the gate of the inner chambers. Since the *beatas* (*xiudao*) are spouses of Jesus, they should stay with quiet mind in one room and meditate and earn merits. Can they be on the streets going here and there? From now on, if there is an urgent matter to go out, even if it is to the house of one’s brothers, first it is necessary to ask the permission of the prioress. She should also select a good person to be a chap-eron, and one should not lightly go over to other people’s houses.⁶⁹

The need to issue such a stern warning shows that *beatas* had been moving about in their villages, and even between villages, without asking permission. Behaviors that Riccio had criticized in Buddhist nuns were now happening among Christian tertiaries. Even worse, some

67. Gates 1996, 193–95; cf. also Topley 1975, 74–75. For a general discussion on eighteenth-century Buddhist nuns, see Grant 1999. Riccio, in his description of the social background of Chinese nuns, failed to mention the large number of poor and orphaned girls who joined the nunneries at a young age.

68. McNamara 1996, 463.

69. Royo, attrib., 1741 [Chinese], f. 2r.

beatas had been spending the night in the houses of relatives and entertaining suspicious contacts with men who were not closely related:

According to Chinese ritual propriety, men and women should not have direct contacts, and sisters-in-law similarly should not visit their brothers-in-law. In the case of religious life, it is one's personal duty to avoid scandals. How could one meet men and be unconcerned about it? [Only] contacts with people within three generations, who have good moral character, are permissible.⁷⁰

The devotion of some of these tertiaries did not meet the priests' standards. Joaquín Royo warned that

occasions when women come to do spiritual things are not pretexts for fun (*xishua* 戲耍). The prioress shall teach them that once they reach the sacred altar they should either pray or examine themselves, and they should never be engaged in other idle things, have conversations with others, or go inside the places of others. The strictest rule of religious life is that the gates of women's quarters should not be entered.

Here, some "light-headed" *beatas* had been chatting too much with other women whom they were supposed to lead in prayer and probably had even dared visit them in their quarters.⁷¹

Reading between the lines, we can consider these infringements traces of the social world of Christian women in Fuan. By blending the practices and attitudes of the "holy" and "reprehensible" *beatas*, we can capture a glimpse of the lives of this group of mainly elite women, who found in their consecrated life a way to attain not only spiritual fulfillment, a measure of intellectual satisfaction, and an almost heroic stature as community leaders but also a meaningful social life, yielding contacts with other women and village society at large. A few were able to inherit their parents' estates *de facto* and exercise some control over their property.⁷²

The new social and ideological spaces opened during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for Fuan Christian women and *beatas*

70. Ibid., f. 3r.

71. Ibid., f. 2v.

72. A probable trace of the historical role occupied by *beatas* living at home in Fuan county is a special expression used only by Catholics to call the paternal aunt in the local dialect. The usual term for this relative is *gujie* 姑姐, *guniang* 姑娘, *ajie* 阿姐, or *jiege* 姐哥. However, in Fuan, Catholics use the dialect word *ato* 阿大, and this linguistic peculiarity is probably connected to the institution of the *beatas*; see *Gantang zhenzhi* 1992, 385: "阿大: 天主教徒稱姑姑"; cf. *Fuan shizhi* 1999, 1022.

also created opportunities for them to explore facets of their own lives that their vocation as Christian virgins and chaste women normally barred: their sentimental and sexual longings. During one of the periods of harshest government suppression in the mid-Qianlong reign, the underground life in the Christian communities created conditions that allowed priests to prey sexually on some married and consecrated women and *beatas* to establish sentimental and consensual liaisons with the priests.

The two decades between 1758 and 1778 were characterized not only by state incursions in Fuan but also, following the arrival of a new vicar apostolic, the Dominican Francisco Pallás, by deep fissures within the Christian community. Pallás had grand schemes to expand the reach of his mission and relocate his men at will to reconstruct what the 1746 government campaign had destroyed. Moreover, the vicar repeatedly, and largely unsuccessfully, attempted to change local practices that he thought conflicted with Christian values and canonical church law, from marriage customs to moneylending to financial contributions for lineage activities.⁷³

But a number of his subordinates, supported by most Fuan Christians, disagreed with his objectives and methods. The Spanish Dominicans Antonio Loranco and Pedro Feliu, and the Chinese Dominicans Pedro Yan 嚴 (Nien) de Santo Domingo, Pedro Miao 繆 (Meu) de Santa Rosa, Simón Luo 羅 (Lo), and Vicente Huy (?) resisted the vicar's plans so fiercely that contemporary sources did not hesitate to call their rebellion the "schism of Fuan." Pedro Yan and Pedro Miao, for example, with the support of local Christians and lay leaders, disobeyed the vicar's orders to relocate to Zhangzhou and elsewhere from their posts in Fuan county and never reconciled with Pallás. The conflict escalated when, in 1766–67, local Christians addressed at least five petitions in Chinese to the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide* in Rome, complaining about Pallás's policies and defending the schismatic priests he had attacked. One document bore the signatures of 269 Christian men from Fuan and the surrounding villages of Dingtou, Sangyang,

73. By 1777 Pallás had succeeded in deploying nine Dominicans—four Spaniards and five Chinese—over the entire mission: two in Zhangzhou, one each in Fuzhou, Luoyuan, and Funing, and four in Fuan county; see APF, SOCP, vol. 61 (1777–79), ff. 666r–67v, letter of Pallás, Jan. 20, 1777.

Yangzhong 洋中, Qidong, Muiyang, Kangjiaban, Lianshou, Luojiaxiang, and Qitian.⁷⁴

This disciplinary tug of war between Pallás and his supporters on one hand and several experienced missionaries and the majority of Chinese Christians on the other accidentally led to the discovery of some scandalous acts of sexual solicitation involving the rebel priests and local women. Investigated as part of Pallás's disciplinary offensive to silence and reduce to complete obedience his subordinates, these cases in fact throw light on the sexual and sentimental aspects of Fujianese Christian women's experience. The women's testimonies reveal that they were both victims of sexual harassment and assault from their pastors and, in some cases, willing participants in unconventional relationships with the itinerant priests.

Could these incidents have remained unknown to the lineages and the local community? Given the heightened state and lineage surveillance of sexual mores during the mid-Qing period, a time characterized by increasing concern for proper female behavior both in social practice and in the legal code, the ignorance seems surprising. Qing lawmakers, in particular, lavished much attention on illicit sex between men and women, adultery, and coerced rape. The state, as part of its civilizing mission (*jiaohua*) among the people, tried to protect the honor of women and their families by arrogating to the government and its local proxies, the lineages, the right to set new boundaries for chaste female behavior. But although state-building and social order may have been the aims of these policies, both conceptions and uses of chastity among women went in different directions. As Janet Theiss has shown, lineages remained rather lax in their commitment to control, and women used new imperial laws and customary understandings of chastity to shape their own new parameters of chaste behavior, which were eventually accepted in the law and in general custom. Women did hold a diverse array of conceptions of chastity, and as Theiss documents, "women whose chastity was important to them made deliberate and considered choices about how to respond when their virtue was impugned." Moreover, some apparently cared little for it: "Not every

74. These petitions are preserved in APF, SOCP, vol. 55 (1765–69), ff. 640r–46r. Emiliano Palladini (1733–93), Propaganda Fide procurator in Macau, received them through "express courier from Fujian" ("con espresso venuto da Fokien") on December 10, 1766, and sent them to Rome in 1767; see *ibid.*, f. 421r.

woman was obsessed with her chastity. Plenty of women carried on adulterous affairs for years without worrying about their reputations." Theiss also adds that "village life, even in single lineage communities, did not preclude privacy and the keeping of secrets; hidden trysts and affairs were possible, even within the manor houses of large extended families." These diverse attitudes to chastity, illicit sex, and adultery, as well as the possibility of maintaining a certain privacy, likely played a role in containing the potentially explosive nature of the cases of solicitation in Fuan.⁷⁵

Trouble developed first in the provincial capital of Fuzhou and later spread to Fuan. On September 19, 1763, Lino Ly, a Chinese priest trained in the Siamese seminary of the Missions Étrangères de Paris, wrote a letter in Latin from Fuzhou to Fuan, addressed to Vicar Apostolic Pallás, his immediate superior within the Propaganda Fide missionary territory. The letter opened with a startling revelation:

There is something of great importance that I cannot omit to denounce in conscience, without staining myself with a sin. A certain missionary in this mission of Fuzhou has sexually solicited some Christian women to commit the sin of lust, under the temptation of the devil, and has committed with them this sin several times, both in and outside the tribunal of confession, while also imprudently accepting the confessions of those women. For the time being, I will not reveal the name of this missionary to Your Excellency, who is in a position to judge whether this matter should be communicated to the inquisitor.⁷⁶

Upon receipt of this denunciation, Pallás deputed one of his priests, Diego Teradillos, to be inquisitor for the case in the fall of 1763. Canon law considered solicitation by members of the clergy an extremely serious sin, and the Inquisition was charged with trying the culprits. Because there was no Inquisition in China, vicars apostolic had delegated powers to conduct a formal trial. Terradillos expeditiously traveled to Fuzhou to uncover the identity of the priest and gather testimony from Lino Ly and the women allegedly involved. In fact, the identity of the man was not so mysterious: the Spanish Dominican Pedro Feliu (1731–?) was the only other pastor besides Ly servicing the tiny Christian community in Fuzhou and the most probable culprit.⁷⁷ In 1758 Feliu had

75. Quotations from Theiss 2004, 196 and 73–74, respectively.

76. APF, SOCP, vol. 55 (1765–69), f. 39r.

77. Some biographical details on Feliu can be found in Ocio 1895, 427–28, where the biographer observes that Feliu "lost his missionary spirit, if he ever had

arrived in the provincial capital from Macao, and according to the evidence that Teradillos collected, beginning in 1759, he had obtained sexual favors during confession from women whom we only know by their romanized names. The 24-year-old “Tang Luyoa Yong,” married to Felipe Ly, for example, first became an object of Feliu’s attentions during the fifth month of 1761, when the priest “touched her dishonestly in her private parts [in confession], and at the beginning of the rite ordered her to get closer and to put herself between his legs.” By the summer of the following year, Feliu became even more daring, when he told Tang during confession in her home “to stand up, that he would teach her to take pleasure. . . and on the bed made her lie together with him, and had a full act of lust with her.” What particularly shocked the inquisitor was the fact that, after intercourse, Feliu continued the confession, absolved her, and the following day at mass gave her communion. Over the years, he did the same with other women in the area, including Helena Seu Tin (33 years old), Teresa Lao (21), and Magdalena Chay Ching (21).

These married women appear to have been from humble social backgrounds and in relatively vulnerable positions. Teresa Lao, who had been born into the family of the Christian catechist Simón Lao, was in 1760 repeatedly approached by Feliu during confession in his two Fuzhou residences outside the western and southern gates of the city, when the woman was still unmarried, and then again after she had joined her new husband in one of the houseboats along the Min River in Fuzhou the following year. The woman was illiterate—she signed her inquisitorial deposition with a cross—and her social status was low, as shown by the fact that she married a boatman who likely belonged to the outcast ethnic Dan 蛋 (Tanka) group living on boats in the lower reaches of the Min.⁷⁸ A sordid episode that occurred before her marriage confirms the poverty of her milieu. When she accidentally became pregnant by Feliu, she was advised by her mother to ask him for money. With some of the silver, Teresa bought an abortion medicine that gave the desired results, but the remaining money must have been considered a form of compensation. One wonders if the low standing

one,” and was expeditiously sent back to Spain by his superiors; for a sanitized version of his biography, see Ocio and Neira 2000, 1: 354.

78. On the Tanka/Dan of the Min River, see Alger 2002, chap. 6; and Szonyi 2002, 45–47.

of her husband is related to her loss of virginity and pregnancy before marriage.

But the worst in the case of Feliu from the point of view of the church authorities was yet to come. The *beata* Lucia Ching, from Fuzhou, also revealed that the missionary “had obliged her several times to commit the sin of lechery using force and terrorizing her.” Here he had not only gone against his own vow of chastity but forced one of the consecrated tertiaries to break her vows. Vicar Pallás immediately wrote a Chinese-language letter to three *beatas* in Fuzhou, including Lucia, warning them that “Father Bai 白 [i.e., Feliu] has damaged and poisoned your souls . . . he is no spiritual father (*shenfu* 神父) but rather a spiritual wolf (*shenlang* 神狼)!” Meanwhile, the scandal spread to Fuan. Pallás’s efforts to uncover further evidence of insubordination from his missionaries intensified. When local women learned of the Fuzhou solicitation cases, they decided to break their silence. Thus, during the summer of 1764 new evidence emerged against another three Dominicans in Fuan: Antonio Loranco (1726–69), Pedro Yan de Santo Domingo (1732–97), and Pedro Miao de Santa Rosa (1726–98).⁷⁹

A perusal of the testimonies by solicited and abused women shows that material conditions were conducive to occasional encounters and even long-standing liaisons between priests and women. Because of state repression, the celebration of rituals happened in private houses, rather than in public spaces. Itinerant missionaries spent several days at a time as guests of local Christian families, sleeping in close quarters and occasionally in the same room as *beatas* and married women. Especially in the cramped houses of poorer families, gender separation was not always physically possible, and women’s seclusion was not absolute (a “mental boundary,” as Theiss puts it). When Loranco visited the Dingtou community on the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus on January 20, 1760, for example, he stayed with a local family belonging to the Huang lineage, sharing the house with several *beatas* from Dingtou and the surrounding communities, who had gathered to receive the sacraments. In particular, he occupied the same room as the *beata* Maria Kuc Hay from Muyang, age 36, and had sexual intercourse with her on two occasions at night. In 1763 Pedro Yan similarly solicited sexual favors from a young candidate to the Third Order, the 24-year-old Magdalena

79. Quotation from APF, SOCP, vol. 55 (1765–69), f. 40r, 45r; and Pallás’s Chinese letter in *ibid.*, f. 213r, respectively.

Chiong Choy, while he was staying in the house of one Meu (Miao) Siong-Cheip in Muyang to celebrate the sacraments at the time of the feast of St. Andrew, November 30.⁸⁰

But in 1768, the scandal unexpectedly took a new turn. The Chinese Dominican Pablo Domingo Yan, who had been in Rome dealing with affairs of the province when the conflicts first flared, returned to China and stayed for a few days in the fall in the residence of Fuzhou. The house, where some local *beatas* lived, was at the time the temporary headquarter of Vicar Pallás as well. When Yan heard the women visit at night the nearby quarters of the bishop, he soon realized that the elderly prelate, who “in his old age [was] still vigorous and flourishing,” had “illicit commerce with [two] tertiaries.” His suspicions of “disorderly love” (*inordinatus amor*) between the women and the bishop were confirmed when the two *beatas* quarreled, and one of them flung herself on the bed of Pallás, complaining she had been betrayed by him. Later, Yan also learned that Pallás had taken some “dresses and feminine things” from a *beata* living in Qitian in Fuan county to give them as a gift to one of his “protégées” in Fuzhou. The inquisitor himself had fallen prey to temptation.⁸¹

The context of the encounters suggests two dynamics at work between local women and priests. In some cases, the priest clearly abused his position of authority to obtain sexual favors from unwilling women, using both psychological pressure and physical violence to obtain consent. Through the celebration of sacraments and the performance of exorcisms, missionaries commanded the obedience and respect of their parishioners, men and women, and occasionally even gained the approval of the local community at large, including the magistrate and yamen personnel. Their treatment thus differed from that of an ordinary local man, especially within Christian circles. Their roles shielded their interactions with female Christians from open criticism and violence by families and outsiders. Moreover, the religious aura surrounding priests, who often developed a privileged spiritual relationship with local women, both those who were married and those consecrated to religious

80. APF, SOCP, vol. 56 (1770–71), f. 102v (case of Maria Kuc Hay), ff. 108r–9v (case of Magdalena Chiong Choy).

81. APF, SOCP, vol. 55 (1765–69), ff. 15r–17r, report by Propaganda Fide Procurator Palladini in Macau; *ibid.*, vol. 56 (1770–71), ff. 42r–44r, letter of Pablo Yan to the procurator.

life, also exempted them to a certain extent from the usual rules of propriety governing interactions between men and women. It also might have created some psychological sense of inferiority and subjection in female penitents, whose virtue was imperiled during individual confession, the ideal setting for intimate conversation, flirtation, and sexual intercourse.

A clear case of abuse of authority is that of Pedro Yan and Magdalena Chiong Choy, a candidate to the Third Order from a non-Christian family. Yan first sexually harassed the young woman at the house of her Christian aunt, and when Magdalena "did not consent as fast as he wanted, he asked her name. When she replied, he told her 'Saint Mary Magdalene sinned, why should you be different?'" The young woman objected to losing her virginity, but Yan countered that he was also losing his. He then asked her about the time of her last menstrual period, assuring her that if it had been early enough, "the sin would not become apparent." Magdalena finally relented. After the encounter, humiliated and fearful, she left the house and refused to attend the upcoming Christmas festivities of 1763. She shared her secret with two female friends in spite of the priest's command to remain silent and "ended up half dead in the house of a girlfriend," in great despair. An illustration of the psychological and moral power exercised by priests over the faithful is the reaction of some of her female relatives and friends when they learned of the incident. Magdalena's aunt, Catalina Miao, and another *beata* in her forties, attempted to contain the scandal and "protect the honor of the father." They asked the young woman to keep the matter secret and even accused her of being possessed by a demon, or being crazy, to discredit her version. Possibly, her aunt argued further, the devil had pretended to be Father Yan to commit that "turpitude." These older women, rather than defend the chastity of their young relative, were instead concerned with the reputations of the priest and, ultimately, of their church. If a candidate to the Third Order was known to have succumbed to the sexual attentions of the priest, the entire institution of the *beatas*, often targeted by non-Christians, would have been in danger of losing local credibility.⁸²

In some cases involving *beatas*, however, we see a second dynamic at work, different from the psychologically violent harassment prevailing with young brides. *Beatas* often acted as domestic helpers for the priests

82. Depositions on this case in APF, SOCP, vol. 56 (1770-71), ff. 109r-10v.

in common residences, a situation that created protracted contact and intimacy between them. Besides engaging in domestic chores for themselves and the priests, moreover, *beatas* also cultivated medical skills that they used in the community, including acupuncture and massage. Both Antonio Loranco and Pedro Yan received massage (called in the sources *golpear el cuerpo*, “to give blows to the body”) from *beatas* on several occasions, a practice that, although therapeutic, also involved a certain physical intimacy and favored sexual involvement, as indeed happened. By virtue of their vows, *beatas* were not under the control of a husband and a mother-in-law, and they either lived in their parental home or in houses that they shared among themselves and with the priests. The sharing of common quarters in private dwellings gave opportunities for escapades or even long-term relationships. Pablo Yan, a critic of these scandalous liaisons, found that the prevailing situation of cohabitation and physical contact between Christian virgins and friars offered “the infidels occasions to tarnish the pure fame of our Faith” and would be the cause of the mission’s ruin. As a bad example, he mentioned the case of a missionary in Fuan, without revealing his name. This priest, who enjoyed great authority in the community, had been cohabiting with a younger *beata* for over eleven years on the same floor, pretending to be simply a “guest,” but instead creating the impression among his Christians that the two were living in concubinage (*contubernium*).⁸³

Some *beatas* harbored an ambivalent attitude toward liaisons with priests, as we can infer from the words one of them addressed to another Christian virgin: “You have strength to resist the father, but I do not have such strength.” Priests were spiritual directors for these women, celebrating mass and confessing them, and thus enjoyed a position of great moral and psychological authority over the women. Vicar Pallás, for example, had been instrumental in convincing three *beatas* in Fuzhou to take the vows in opposition to their family’s wishes. But to some *beatas*, their pastors probably also offered a welcome emotional and sexual relief outside the constraining borders of conventional marriage, which these women had consciously rejected through their vows of chastity. The fit of jealousy of one of the Fuzhou *beatas* involved with Vicar Pallás suggests more than a fleeting tryst. The relationship

83. Ibid., f. 43v, letter of Pablo Yan to Propaganda Fidé Procurator Palladini, October 2, 1768.

involved exchange of gifts (dresses, stockings, and special underwear made in the Philippines) as well as a psychological and physical relationship. Apparently, some of these relationships were known within the circle of Chinese women close to the priests. When Antonio Loranco had his encounter with the *beata* Maria Kuc Hay in Dingtou, two other local *beatas*, Ines Houg Hung and Houg Ching (both from the Huang lineage of Dingtou) were in a nearby room, separated only by a thin wooden wall, and became aware of the incident. One wonders if later on there was even some complicity on the part of those *beatas*, as when, in the first month of 1765, Loranco sent the *beata* Houg Sa to Muyang to warn Maria "to be careful and avoid being talkative."⁸⁴

The priests, who lived alone most of the time, in a situation of great precariousness and danger, had longings for intimacy and companionship and, sometimes, domination. Trained in priories where they lived a regimented life and had little unsupervised contact with women, once in the mission Dominicans found themselves immersed in the lay world and thrust into the bowels of Chinese familial networks. It is thus not surprising that Pedro Yan admitted to one *beata* his human weakness by saying that "when he confessed and said mass he acted on behalf of God, but the rest of the time he was a man." Studies of sexual solicitation in Spain and its colonies in the early modern period indicate that members of the mendicant orders, mostly Franciscans but also Dominicans, were often guilty of solicitation. These itinerant friars were in charge of popular missions and of confession and preaching in female convents, a task that they carried out over vast areas due to the lack of secular clergy to staff parishes. In many ways, they faced the same situations of their brethren in China.⁸⁵

Yet, these relationships always remained clandestine and fraught with great psychological and religious tension. The depositions of the women involved, especially of *beatas*, show their great anxiety over these actions' sinfulness, which either represented adultery for married women or broke vows of virginity for consecrated women, and created several instances of sacrilegious confessions and communions. In confession, guilty missionaries tended to absolve the sexual acts as soon as

84. APF, SOCP, 56 (1770-71), f. 104r.

85. Ibid., f. 112v; on mendicant orders and solicitation in Spain, see Haliczky 1996, 87-88; several other studies focus on solicitation in Spain and the colonies, including Sarrión Mora 1994, Alejandre 1994, and González Marmolejo 2002.

they were consummated or tell the penitents that confession of those sins was unnecessary. But as Magdalena Chiong Choy astutely replied, "If I do not confess [these sins], there is no point in confessing at all."⁸⁶

The solicitation cases denounced to Rome eventually were solved with the transfer of some of the Spanish Dominicans back to Europe (Feliu, for example, ended his days in a priory in his native province of Aragon) and with the deaths of the other protagonists. Pallás died in 1778, and much of the tension that his policies had engendered subsided. As he was dying, Pedro Yan eventually sought reconciliation with the new vicar in 1797, asking to be forgiven for his schism and sins. Only Pedro Miao died apparently unrepentant. The women involved simply disappear from the historical record, but not without leaving the impression that, though often victimized by their pastors, they also occasionally found in their celibate status a niche to express their innermost feelings and to express agency. The local Christian community silenced the scandals, and Fuan's mechanisms of social control, in particular lineages, did not engage in any repressive reaction.

We will never know whether the episodes of sexual liaisons in the Qianlong reign were isolated incidents, favored by harsh state repression, by the personality of the priests involved, and by the acrimony of the internal struggle lacerating the Christian community during those years. Did sexual misdemeanors and crimes happen in the mission even before that time of crisis, or afterward? Before the great anti-Christian campaign of 1746, local Christians did not apparently find their missionaries at fault in sexual matters. Lucas Guo Jinren, who had sheltered a missionary in his house for many years, responding to a question about possible sexual impropriety at his home, under torture testified to authorities in 1746 that "certainly [the priest did not make advances with my wife]. If such things had happened, we would not be so stupid to let them live in our houses."⁸⁷

86. APF, SOCP, 56 (1770-71), f. 110r.

87. See the transcript of the interrogation in GM, 2: 202. The only early reference in missionary sources to possible sexual misdemeanor known to me is an alleged polemical remark by the Jesuit Antonio de Gouvea reported by Fuzhou Christians to the Dominican Francisco Varo in the 1670s. Attacking the methods of the Dominicans, Gouvea told his parishioners that in Fuan "they mixed men and women and that the virgins dedicated to God had given birth to babies in the church," a sentence transliterated in romanized Chinese by Varo as follows (with

Transmission of Values and Christian Localization

In spite of the sexual scandals of the 1770s, the Dominicans continued to exercise their priestly ministry, and the institution of the *beatas* continued to flourish until the Republican period and garner the respect of local society and of generations of women who continued to join the Third Order. A sign that Christian female celibacy became fully accepted and assimilated into local life is the appearance in lineage genealogies of mentions of the virginal status of daughters who had become *beatas*. Through expressions such as *shouzhen* 守貞 (chaste), *shouzhen buzi* 守貞不字 (chaste and unmarried), *tongzhen* 童貞 (virgin), and *zai-shi* 在室 (staying at home), genealogies recognized the normalcy of these women within the prescribed framework of family relations. Notations of this kind started appearing in the early nineteenth century in genealogies of the Miao of Muyang, the Huang of Dingtou, the Feng of Sangyang, the Zhao of Qitian, and the Luo of Luojiexiang; some sixty *beatas* are identified by name and generational position. This tradition within specific lineages continued into the Republican period. According to documents seized by Communist authorities in 1949, there were then 328 *beatas* in Fuan county alone, and almost half of them belonged to a handful of surnames, the Miao of Muyang, the Guo of Xiyang, the Zhao of Qitian, and the Feng of Sangyang.⁸⁸

As noted by Zhang Xianqing, Fuan's genealogies celebrate both the heterodox virginity of the Christians and the normative chastity of unmarried betrothed girls. Although the prefaces to these genealogies and the explanations of filial piety and chastity appended to them still relied on a Confucian vocabulary and symbolic repertoire, Christian virginity had surreptitiously found a place in family and local life. However, no Christian virgin ever left a trace in the official annals of Fuan county. No Christian woman, not to mention a *beata*, is identified as such in the "Lienü" section of the Fuan gazetteer. But one of their "Confucian" nemeses is there to remind us of their suppressed presence. Among the biographies of chaste and filial women of the Kangxi period is one for Lian Zhushi (see Chapter 5). After her husband, a literatus from the

modernized pinyin spelling and characters here): *nannü hunza*, *shoutongshengde sheng erzi zai Tianzhu tang* 男女混雜，守童身的生兒子在天主堂; see Varo 1678, f. 345v.

88. Genealogical, archival, and fieldwork data in Zhang Xianqing 2003a, 211–15, and 2009, 281–86.

fiercely anti-Christian Liu lineage of Suyang, died, she was left with a daughter but no son to continue the family line. As expected of a virtuous woman, Madame Lian swore to remain chaste until death, filially obeyed her mother-in-law, and wove cloth to support her. She chose her husband's nephew as the heir of her departed spouse, confirming the sacred principle of patrilineal inheritance. The gazetteer concludes her exemplary biography with a note:

Some women neighbors [of Lian Zhushi] were misled into following the teachings of the Western Ocean heterodoxy [which was then spreading] in our county. Lian Zhushi told them with altered countenance: "Only [I], a widow, know how to avoid shame! How can you kneel to those padres, in order to pray for happiness and advantages?" But she was the only one to see this and speak.⁸⁹

Few indeed spoke out against Christian women by the late Kangxi period. Christian ways had become begrudgingly tolerated in Mindong. Some women could, and would, kneel in front of their foreign padres for confession or to receive communion. A selected number would even refuse marriage and enter the ranks of the *beatas*.⁹⁰

In this and the previous chapter, I have shown how Christian religious principles rooted in Catholic theology, such as worship of the Lord of Heaven to the exclusion of the ancestors and celibacy for members of religious orders, were transmitted by the Dominicans to their converts. This transmission of ideas, some extraneous to the Chinese conceptual repertoire, was a process fraught with difficulties and ambiguities. By the eighteenth century, however, Christianity's notion of filiality toward the departed and Christian virginity had become accepted ideas in Fuan. The localization of Christianity in the region thus not only consisted of a process of social entrenchment and ritual-devotional blending but also affected the realm of values, and provoked some restructuring of social conventions.

The process of entrenchment was in fact interactive, and all factors, including conversion through kinship networks, rituals, transmission of new and reformed values through texts, and new social practices,

89. See FAXZ, 490.

90. The example of the Mindong *beatas* was also followed elsewhere. The institution of Christian virgins established in the Sichuan mission by the MEP congregation during the eighteenth century, for instance, was directly inspired by the Fujianese prototype and statutes; see Entenmann 1996b.

worked together to extend the threshold of local religious tolerance. Conflicts with Chinese socio-religious values and practices, such as ancestral rituals and universal marriage, never disappeared. Local people, however, came to see the social choices of Christians as congruent with the new religious teachings they had chosen to follow and refrained from interfering in most cases. This toleration occurred not only because of the structural factors highlighted in previous chapters but also thanks to the Christian community's effective negotiations over those Christian values and practices considered controversial in the local context, such as the modification of ancestral worship and the virginity of consecrated people. These results were accomplished through modification of previous ritual practices and social values, or substitution with different rituals, including abolition of ancestral tablets, limited obeisances at special times before portraits of the ancestors, and the use of Catholic devotions for the dead. Another strategy was the appropriation of certain congruent Chinese values, such as widow chastity, as well as existing patterns of worship, into Christian practice. Thus, new values slowly found a place in the set of local conceptual, ritual, and social ideas and practices.

The confession given Qing authorities by the Christian degree-holder Chen Chou in 1746 seems to confirm that by the mid-eighteenth century local converts had come to share the vision of the Dominicans: "The principles of the Lord of Heaven are even stronger than those of Confucius" (*Tianzhu de daoli bi Kong sheng hai qiang* 天主的道理比孔聖還強). Such statements did not mean that values associated with the Confucian social and cultural system, such as filiality and chastity, had to be rejected. Rather, they had to be reinterpreted in a new hierarchy of meaning, dominated by the Christian god and only in a second degree by Confucius, who represented the orthodox social order and the patriarchal hierarchy.⁹¹

By means of religious practice, Christians aimed at obtaining what one of the Fuan men arrested in 1746, Wang Ejian, called the "advantages" (*haochu* 好處) of Christianity. These benefits were mainly, though not exclusively, spiritual. The goal for the most committed Mindong Christians was eternal salvation, and they apparently did not fear imprisonment, torture, and, potentially, death at the hand of the Qing state machinery to achieve that goal. In the words of Guo Jinren,

91. Quotation from AMEP, vol. 436, f. 140 (YQTW, doc. 34, 138).

"Although [we Christians] externally respect the Chinese legal system, in our heart in fact we still believe and obey our Teachings of the Lord of Heaven, and even if punished by law, we dare not recant." Even people who balked and apostatized under pressure were later discovered by authorities to have lapsed again into Christianity, a testimony of the enduring power of spiritual rewards.⁹²

Spiritual rewards were accompanied by social rewards. In the case of the *beatas*, consecrated life offered more "advantages" than they could have found in marriage. A popular song from Fuan entitled "The Ten Keys" ("Shi ba suoshi" 十把鎖匙) poignantly expresses the unpleasant reality that faced many brides in Mindong. Each of the ten keys alluded to in the song locked away forever a part of the bride's family house upon her marriage. The consequences of this event were traumatic for a young woman, as the song remonstrates:

Father, mother, and the family are left behind forever,
brothers remain at home, but sisters are married outside.

.....

Sisters are strangers,
they set foot on the boat and leave on the waters
to repay the grace of parents.

.....

Brothers stay in the paternal home to take care of family property,
while sisters are married off with their bride's trousseau.

.....

A son is the completion of the family,
a daughter can only be as good as cheap wood.⁹³

Given the social realities behind this song, becoming a Christian *beata* certainly must have been an attractive choice for many local women.

92. Quotation from AMEP, vol. 436, ff. 141-40 [sic] (YQTW, doc. 34, 137).

93. *Zhongguo geyao jicheng* 1992, 143-44.

CONCLUSION

Ruptures: Fuan After the Opium Wars

The historical developments and conjunctures outlined in Chapters 1–4 and the socioeconomic and religious changes of the Ming and Qing periods examined in Chapters 5–8 helped shape the life of the Christian communities in Mindong, sometimes in unpredictable directions. Despite recurrent state repression, in the 1830s, on the eve of the First Opium War, Mindong Christians had won a niche for their communal and individual activities and carved a social space within which to affirm their religious identity. A sign of this maturity in the life of the communities was the quick recovery in confidence after the anti-heterodoxy police raids that rattled Fuan in 1837–39. By 1840, Christians were again daring to celebrate rituals in public with the tacit approval of local magistrates.

Starting in the mid-1840s, the renewed vitality of Mindong Christianity was greatly enhanced by historical events. The defeat of China in the First Opium War, the signing of the Treaty of Whampoa in 1844, and the diplomatic negotiations over religious freedom for Christians between the French and Qing plenipotentiaries in 1845–46 resulted in a *de facto* French protectorate over the Catholic missions in China. The central government ordered local magistrates to tolerate Christian activities. An imperial edict issued in 1846, however, allowed free

missionary activity only in five selected open ports and forbade foreign missionaries from entering the interior. The Dominicans still had to act prudently in ministering their inland missions. On one hand, they took advantage of Fuzhou's and Xiamen's status as treaty ports to strengthen their position in the rest of Fujian. The friars had cared for the Fuzhou Catholic community since the eighteenth century, and Protestant missionaries, who first reached Fuzhou in 1847, would not represent a challenge to their evangelizing efforts for several decades. The Xiamen region had always been the crucial transit point for the large Minnanese population in Manila and was the closest location for the Spanish to monitor the traffic of people, money, and merchandise between China and the Philippines. The Dominicans built a church on Gulang-yu 鼓浪嶼 island near Xiamen to serve the foreign community in the treaty port, but the mission was never successful among local Chinese and was mainly a logistic base. On the other hand, in the old communities of Zhangzhou, as the newly arrived missionary Francisco Zea (1815–75) mentioned, open activities were still officially forbidden, masses continued to be celebrated at 2:00 A.M. in secrecy, and sick people were visited at night, “to avoid as much as possible offering the pagans pretexts to persecute the neophytes.”¹

Qing provincial officials, however, remained indulgent or indifferent toward Catholic activities. This attitude had been prevalent since the 1830s, but was probably further encouraged by fears of stirring trouble with the foreign powers and the Qing central authorities. Moreover, the political crises of the 1840s and 1850s (Second Opium War and Taiping Rebellion) diminished the urgency of suppressing Christian activities. Conflict was also averted because missionaries continued to act prudently, since no treaty truly protected them in the interior. The flourishing of the Mindong communities at this juncture is thus to be attributed to this new official policy of toleration, as well as to a continuation of the inner development of these communities within their local environments in the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods. The situation of relative social harmony achieved before the 1837 suppression campaign prevailed again, and abundant new financial resources pouring in from abroad, especially from France, fueled Christian expansion. The newly established Society for the Propagation of the Faith, based in Lyon and Paris, funded several projects in the Dominican mission,

1. GH, 3: 116.

including orphanages, churches, and residences. By 1848 the mission of Fujian counted fourteen priests (seven foreign and seven native ones) and 30,430 Christians.²

In the long run, these changes radically reshaped the way Christians and priests interacted with local society. Until the 1840s, the Christian communities of Mindong had developed a network of chapels and activities in harmony with the surroundings. Due to limited funding and fear of official repression, missionaries until then had used local resources to build only small-scale churches (usually inside houses) to proselytize and to hide in. The communities of Mindong had been able to survive over a century of official proscription by rooting Christianity into the local arena: in the 1840s, half the local priests were Chinese, and local Christians themselves were responsible for maintaining the faith and further expanding its reach.

But the treaties led to a gradual change. A sign of this change was the construction of separate missionary quarters in the late 1840s and 1850s. The rules of the cloister were applied to the new residences, which included a few catechists and a schoolmaster, as well as a cook-laundryman to serve the missionary. As Vicar Apostolic Tommaso Gentili observed, missionaries now had contacts with the faithful only in church or for the administration of special sacraments at home (such as the last rites at a deathbed), and the priests became increasingly remote and authoritarian figures. During the years of underground activities, on the contrary, missionaries had to suffer “many inconveniences, remaining locked in a small room during the day and being importuned by the children and the other people of the house [hosting them].” This dependence on their hosts, however, had guaranteed that priests were closer to the local people and their spiritual and ritual needs.³

The new churches and gated missionary residences acquired an important and novel symbolic meaning, which becomes clear when we consider the first missionary case in Fuan county after the signing of the treaties. In the 1840s and 1850s, chapels had continued to be built in the traditional style and often were remodeled large houses. Local communities, with financial help from the missionaries, were in charge of constructing the buildings and quite naturally used the architecture

2. GH, 3: 123; on the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, see Harrison 2008.

3. Gentili 1887–88, 3: 134–35.

they were familiar with.⁴ With the signing of the Beijing Convention in 1860, however, the situation changed dramatically. France assumed official patronage over all Catholic missionary operations in China regardless of the nationality of the missionaries. The Spanish Dominicans, no longer in danger of being arrested and effectively protected by French and Spanish consular personnel in Fuzhou and Xiamen and by the French Legation in Beijing, became more and more daring in challenging the local power structures and the symbolic world of the villages.⁵

The first missionary case in Mindong exploded in 1863 in Muyang. The immediate cause was the attempt of the Spanish missionary Cristóbal Plá (1832–95) and the local Christians (around 30 percent of the local population) to build a church at the center of the village. The local elders (*xiangqi* 鄉耆) objected on the grounds that the temple of the foreign god, with its pointed architecture, would have adverse effects on the local *fengshui*. The missionary initially agreed to stop the project but later ordered the work resumed. An angry mob led, in the words of the Christian defendants, by a “rotten *jiansheng*” (*lie jian* 劣監) burned the construction materials. The case went all the way to Beijing and involved the provincial governor and the new office in charge of foreign relations, the Zongli Yamen (abbreviation of Zongli geguo shiwu yamen 總理各國事務衙門, “Office for the General Management of Foreign Affairs”). The new boldness of the missionaries and of the Christian community was clearly at the root of the conflict. Building a church with Western features at the center of the village was intended to upset the spiritual landscape and symbolically to break the atmosphere of toleration that had existed between the 7,000 non-Christians and the 3,000 Christians of Muyang. After a year of social tension, non-

4. This was the case with the large church of Dingtou, built with funds supplied by Vicar Apostolic Carpena in the late 1840s. The vicar apostolic “chose two local Christians to direct the work and to build the church in their fashion, limiting himself to funding the project” (see Gentili 1887–88, 3: 167). The French ambassador and chief negotiator of the 1844 treaty, Théodore Marie de Lagrené (1800–1862), also recommended in a report to the French government in 1845 against the construction of chapels in European style, since such “unaccustomed architecture will certainly irritate to the utmost Chinese sensibilities,” and suggested that religious images sent to China be “more Chinese in style” (Wei 1961, 383).

5. Spanish interests in Fujian were handled by French consuls in Fuzhou starting in 1863; in Xiamen, the Spanish consulate was staffed by Spanish nationals between 1863 and 1896, the year of the end of Spanish rule in the Philippines; thereafter French consuls stepped in; see *Qingji Zhongwai shiling nianbiao* 1985, 164–65.

Christians agreed to abide by the new pro-Christian laws enforced from Beijing after an ordinary house was adapted as a chapel.⁶

The dynamics of post-Opium War missionary cases, which many scholars have analyzed in detail since the 1960s, are visible in the 1863 Muyang case. The localization of Christianity in Mindong during the underground period had not antagonized the local power structure or upset the spiritual landscape of temples and *fengshui* defended by the Muyang elders. But this was no longer the case after 1860. All over the country, violent confrontations were fueled by the statutes of exemption protecting missionaries and converts against the “pretensions” of local communities. Scholars have shown that the breach in the social compact binding villagers to a common identity as symbolized by temples or communal property meant that Catholics had “embarked on a separate way of life (*shengmian* 生面) and were termed sectarians (*jiaomin* 教民) and no more Chinese (*Hanmin* 漢民).”⁷

This book has shown that, in fact, Catholics had lived as *Hanmin* for generations before this period, without directly attacking the village institutions, through negotiations in their daily life. If they were ever perceived as *jiaomin* in Mindong, that could have happened only under the new circumstances of the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet it would be inaccurate to assume uniformity of conditions in Catholic communities throughout the empire. In Fujian, as Li Wenhui has shown, for example, the vast majority of missionary cases between the 1850s and 1900 involved Protestants (74 percent), but less than one quarter (23 percent) were related to Catholics, in spite of the higher number of Catholics in the province until the latter part of the century. This crude statistical fact suggests that for most of the nineteenth century, peace and harmony between local society and Catholics in fact prevailed throughout the province.⁸

6. Sources on this case are in *Qingmo jiao'an* 1996–99, 2: 381–82 (Chinese documents from the Christian party); *Jiaowu jiao'an dang* 1974–81, 1.3: 1288–92 (official summaries by the Zongli yamen); Gentili 1887–88, 3: 198–211; and GH, 3: 167–71 (missionary documents). For a description of this case, see Lin Wenhui 1989, 70–73; regarding the position of local officials vis-à-vis the gentry in Fuan, see Paul Cohen 1963, 171.

7. Quotation from Litzinger 1996, 52, referring to the situation in north China; see also R. Thompson 1996.

8. Lin Wenhui 1989, 195 (3 percent of the cases display no clear affiliation); cf. also Chen Yinkun 1991.

In Fuan county, for instance, almost two decades of peace followed the 1863 turmoil in Muyang. The mid-1880s witnessed a spike in conflict, and the years until 1900 were characterized in Fujian by far tenser relations between local society and Catholic communities, in part as a result of what missionaries called “France’s total loss of prestige in China” during the Franco-Chinese War of 1884. Although tensions were simmering even before the war (e.g., during an incident in Qidong in 1881), the Franco-Chinese hostilities, in particular the destruction by French gunboats of the southern Chinese fleet anchored in Fuzhou, inaugurated a period of nationalistic backlash against the most visible target of French influence in the province, the Catholic missions. Several incidents happened in Mindong between 1884 and 1897. In 1884, for example, Fujianese provincial authorities dispatched troops to Fuan to protect Catholics from the popular wrath encouraged by local officials in the wake of the Fuzhou naval debacle. On that occasion patriotic mobs burned down some local churches. But most of the incidents in the 1880s and 1890s stemmed from disputes over property and the opposition by locals to the construction of churches and other buildings spearheaded by missionaries, as in the 1863 Muyang case.⁹

The solution to the Muyang crisis once again shows that, as long as Christians tried to “belong” in local society and did not challenge the status quo, they were tolerated. Tommaso Maria Gentili, vicar apostolic of Fujian in the 1870s and a missionary involved in the negotiations to solve the 1863 crisis, tells us that in 1864 his confrere Plá bought “a large and ancient house owned by Christians, which was remodeled and modified in its interior and that up to our days [1880s] has been used as a church, although from the outside, it just appears as a simple house.” The house did not disrupt the local *fengshui*, and its reassuring architectural style confirmed in the eyes of locals that their Catholic neighbors and relatives were not attempting to dominate local life or to exploit the treaties to their advantage. Gentili, however, commented with some dismay in 1888 that Plá’s unfulfilled desire to build a large church in Muyang re-emerged in the late 1880s “after twenty-four years of almost perfect tranquillity and peace, . . . [as] the only reason for major disturbances and persecutions in that unhappy mission.” Gentili

9. On the role of local officials in directing popular anger toward foreigners and in leading popular protests and imperial policy during the Franco-Chinese War, especially in Guangdong, see Eastman 1967.

deemed the zealous efforts of his fellow missionary unwise and inopportune given the changed atmosphere of the 1880s. As a result of Plá's campaign to build a church in Muyang, in December 1887 a militia of over 600 men, gathered from nearby villages and under the leadership of local gentry, attacked and once again leveled the construction site, destroying all the building materials. Two weeks later, a large gathering of people in Fuan, numbering several thousand, initiated a wider campaign to destroy local churches. Within days, chapels in Fuan, Qidong, and Suyang lay in ruin. In some places, however, attackers encountered fierce resistance from alliances of Christian and "gentile" villagers. In Luojiaxiang, for example, defenders used a small cannon to scare away the assailants. Kinship and neighborly ties pulled villagers together, in this case. Missionaries and Christians in Muyang tried to obtain redress from local officials through the French consul in Fuzhou, and lawsuits and violence continued inconclusively until 1889, when the local magistrate mediated a compensation agreement with the local missionary. Many gentry and commoners alike harbored great animosity toward the foreign priests and their communities for actions that they rightly deemed injurious to public peace and rooted in symbolic challenges as well as economic conflicts. No church was built in Muyang until 1893, and certain villages, including Suyang, an anti-Christian stronghold since the late Ming, expelled Christians. A common pattern in these episodes of violence and protracted tension was the splitting of loyalties along village borders or, in larger towns, along family lines. As was common elsewhere in China during this period, religious differences solidified around long-standing rifts and disputes over water rights, land, access to common resources, and symbolic control over physical spaces. But these conflicts did not destroy the Catholic communities, and in most places accommodation with non-Christians prevailed, especially after 1900.¹⁰

10. Quotations from Gentili 1887–88, 3: 211. On the Muyang case and the disputes that followed in 1887, 1888–91, and 1895–97, see Lin Wenhui 1989, 73–86 (based on *Jiaowu jiao'an dang* 1974–81, 5.3: 1867–955, 6.2: 1390–429, and 6.3: 1459–524); and GH, 3: 257–65. On similar cases in the period 1860–1900, and for a localized interpretation of these conflicts similar to mine, see Sweeten 2001, 177–95 (for Jiangxi); and Joseph Lee 2003, 163–71 (for Guangdong). Cf. also Xiaojuan Huang 2006, conclusion.

Continuities: The Christian Virgins

Even during the period of conflict that the politico-economic changes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries engendered, the Catholics of Mindong maintained striking institutional and social continuities with the pre-1840s era. These continuities were keys to the survival of local Christian communities. The “Christian virgins” are among the most visible institutional signs of continuity, of a communitarian *longue durée* of almost four centuries of Catholic history in Mindong. Chapter 8 explores the development of this institution during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The number of *beatas* continued to grow in the nineteenth century, especially after new charitable activities, such as “Holy Childhood” orphanages, elementary schools, and catechism courses, gave employment to many of these women. If earlier only women from relatively prosperous families could remain unmarried and live at home, engaging in personal self-cultivation and limited charitable activities, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many more joined the ranks of the *beatas*, since they could support themselves by working for church institutions. Missionary reports, as well as materials collected by Communist authorities both before and after 1949 during the course of land reform, confirm the phenomenal growth in numbers of these women—500 to 800 in the 1940s. Communist data show that although richer women continued to account for over 40 percent of all “virgins,” almost 57 percent came from poorer backgrounds, including 25 percent from indigent peasantry. In institutional terms, the “virgins” reached full maturity on the eve of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, when local women finally established a convent in Muyang. The founder and prioress of the new institution was Catalina Miao, a member of the most important local lineage. Her charismatic role in the village was remarkable: in 1947 she convinced members of her branch of the Miao lineage to donate for four consecutive years the rice yield deriving from their communal ancestral property to support the completion of a local hospital named after the eighteenth-century martyred Bishop Sanz, which she ran. Like her predecessors in centuries past, Catalina mustered wide societal respect for her role as a leader in charitable activities.¹¹

11. On Christian virgins in the 1930s–1940s, see Zhang Xianqing 2005b, based on a 1962 *neibu* 内部 report from the religious bureau of Ningde, not accessible to foreign researchers; on Catalina Miao, see GH, 4: 383–84.

Despite their exalted role in local society, *beatas* had to face fierce antireligious campaigns by Communist activists during the 1930s and 1940s. One symbolic target of Communist groups was the Catholic orphanage. Foreign nuns and Chinese virgins ran most orphanages, and Communist fighters targeted *beatas* for their role in those institutions. Catholic orphanages had always been controversial in rural China and attracted the ire of local gentry and community leaders since the mid-nineteenth century. They became the focus of popular protests as sites of Catholic “magic” and “torture,” centering on the alleged Christian practice of buying babies to gouge their eyes out in order to produce longevity drugs for the foreigners. Communist propaganda not only exploited these existing anti-Christian rumors, based on the missionary practice of collecting abandoned infants to baptize them before death, but also accused *beatas* of being unproductive members of society. In particular, Communists blamed the Catholic church for the scarcity of badly needed brides in Fujian, a complaint surrounding the *beatas* since the days of the Qing dynasty.¹²

After 1949, the reorganization of society led to a thorough, government-mandated reform of the Catholic church in China. Papal authority was rejected, and a new mass organization, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, was established in 1957 to assure political conformity to state objectives by Christians and their religious leaders. Those who clung to old ways, remained faithful to the pope, and resisted the new order, especially the clergy, faced imprisonment and re-education for many years. In the 1960s, the Cultural Revolution led to a complete annihilation of church activities and forced many Christian religious to return to their families and find regular jobs. But after the high tide of the Cultural Revolution had passed, *beatas* resurfaced as a Catholic institution, supported by an emerging network of the underground church faithful to Rome. According to a recent anonymous manuscript history of the “unofficial” church of Fuan, between the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s some local priests, an elderly nun, and a lay catechist trained around two hundred “virgins” (*shouzhennü*) in several mountain hamlets of Fuan county, including Liuyang and Xiyin. After learning a basic catechism and the main prayers, these women

12. On Communist anti-Catholic activities, see GH, 4: *passim*. The Chinese popular rumor that missionaries gouged eyes to produce long-life elixirs dates at least to the early eighteenth century; see Haar 2006, 159.

traveled to villages at night to prepare people for baptism, confession, communion, and confirmation, trying to elude government control. By the 1990s, however, recurrent government crackdowns and a lack of adequate training and internal regulations obliged many of the women to find regular employment, often away from their native place. As in many other locales in China, Mindong became painfully split between a government-backed official church and an underground church. In 1992, the local unofficial bishop, Xie Shiguang 謝士光 (1917–2005), and some of his priests unsuccessfully sought help to re-establish the institution of *beatas* with help from an existing convent of Chinese Dominican nuns in Mindong, belonging to the official church, and from Dominican nuns of the diocese of Jiayi 嘉義 in Taiwan. Finally, after much study of the rules of the Ursulines, Dominican nuns, and the Dominican Third Order, a commission drafted new rules that incorporated “the reality of the local diocese and its traditional spirit.” The new Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Merciful Sacred Heart was born. Approved by Rome in 1997, the rules were designed to regulate the life of around 380 local “virgins,” who continued to live in their families and often had lay jobs. Many of them were almost illiterate, and to train them and give them a means of supporting themselves near their native villages, the church opened a small workshop for the production of Western-style suits with the help of some local Catholic entrepreneurs. Concurrently, unofficial training courses saw to educating the Little Sisters, until a police raid shut them down in late 1993. In spite of this early setback, from 1994 on the Little Sisters have continued their activities. Several graduated, obtaining some instruction in moral and dogmatic theology, and took their vows in the church of Luojiexiang. Two of them left Fujian to get a university education as a teacher and a medical worker. Eventually these consecrated Little Sisters opened an orphanage and four retirement houses for the elderly and continued assisting with the management of the clothing factory and several churches.¹³

13. On the police raid on the Fuan training classes for novices in December 1993, see Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN), Dispatch CH 9322.0753, February 9, 1994 (available online at <http://www.ucanews.com>, UCAN Archives); on the training of the Little Sisters, I consulted an unpublished Chinese-language history of the unofficial church in Fuan, completed around 2000.

The Local Religious Space: Past and Present

The story of the Little Sisters brings us back to the present and also connects us to the past. It highlights the continued tension and accommodation between state power and local religious culture and social organization that has characterized the history of Mindong's Catholics for almost four centuries. If in the Qing period local order and orthodox customs (as perceived from the center, rather than in their actuality) were at stake, today the state's preoccupations focus on control of the social organization of the Catholic communities, cast as adversaries of the Communist Party's organizations. If lineages were charged with management of local religion and society in the old days, today a plethora of government-approved religious associations do the job. The Catholic Patriotic Association and the approved "open" ecclesiastical hierarchy are the liaisons between center and periphery. The adversary is the "underground" church. The faithful seem caught between the hammer of the state and the anvil of the two competing churches.

Today, the diocese of Mindong counts around 80,000 Catholics: a large "underground" constituency of 70,000 faithful and a following for the patriotic church amounting to around 10,000 faithful. The diplomatic and ideological divide between the government of the People's Republic and the Vatican thus seems to reverberate in local life. Yet, most of the rituals in the imposing modern churches rebuilt since 1980 in Mindong are celebrated by local "underground" clergy, attended and funded by local "underground" Christians, as well as by donations from overseas Chinese and other foreign donors. The label "underground" is clearly contradicted by the openness of these local actors. In recent years, moreover, the line between open (*gongkai* 公開) and underground (*dixia* 地下) churches has become increasingly blurred nationwide. In Mindong, in particular, the followers of the underground church greatly outnumber those in the open church. Reality trumps ideology. The Chinese state, in its drive to build a "harmonious society" and in an attempt to relieve itself of welfare functions it can hardly afford, welcomes charitable activities from both churches in areas that are not threatening to its ideological dominance. The government-approved and rather young bishop of the Mindong diocese, Vincent Zhan Silu 詹思祿, for example, in March 2008 participated in discussions in Beijing about social issues and "efforts to build a harmonious society," as a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. In

the hope of eventually controlling local initiatives through close monitoring by the Catholic Patriotic Association, the state begrudgingly recognizes that long-standing local traditions of resistance, like those found in Mindong's Catholic communities, cannot be fully suppressed. In spite of their illegality, for example, several small retirement homes run by the unofficial Little Sisters received *de facto* recognition in early 2008, at the time of the official opening of a new home for the elderly in Fuan, run by the state-approved diocese. A Guangdong-based official Catholic website acknowledged the Mindong underground operations, translating into Chinese an English-language dispatch by the Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN) on the new approved Fuan retirement home as well as on the "nine retirement homes serving around 60 elderly, run by the underground church" in the surrounding region. The January 2008 inauguration of a modern seven-story diocesan building in Luoji-axiang, the native village of Gregorio Luo Wenzao, at the hands of "underground" Bishop Vincent Huang Shoucheng 黃守誠 (b. 1923), amid a crowd of around 2,000 local faithful and 42 unofficial priests, is a clear sign that the government has to accommodate the desires of the large local Catholic constituency. At a cost of over 2 million yuan and erected with labor and building materials contributed by local Catholics in a strikingly modern style near the 1994 cathedral dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, the new diocesan facility contains a chapel, meeting rooms, a library, offices, a kitchen and dining room, and around 50 bedrooms for priests and visitors. It rises on the grounds of the old apostolic school, where Huang Shoucheng studied in the 1930s for the priesthood, and which was occupied by a local middle school after the Liberation.¹⁴

Today's historical context is vastly different from that of the late imperial period, and new ideological and economic-political configura-

14. On Bishop Zhan's participation in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, see UCAN dispatch CH 04597.1487, March 7, 2008; on the government-approved Fuan retirement home, see the Guangdong-based (Zhongshan 中山 township) website *Tianzhu gongjiao wang* 天主公教網 (Catholic Church net) at <http://www.cncatholic.org/news/200802/25554.html> (last consulted Oct. 12, 2008), referring to the English-language dispatch UCAN CH 04413.1484 (Feb. 12, 2008); on the fluid, ambiguous, and "amphibious" nature of Chinese Catholic websites today, like the one from Guangdong here quoted, see Clarke 2007. On the Luojiang 羅江 diocesan building, see UCAN dispatch CH 04271.1481 (Jan. 22, 2008).



Fig. 9.1 Church of Our Lady of the Rosary in Luojiang 羅江 (formerly Luojiexiang), the native village of Luo Wenzao, dedicated on October 1, 1994. The church is currently the cathedral of the unofficial diocese of Funing/Mindong (photograph by the author, 1997).

tions, as well as issues of foreign policy, including Chinese-Vatican relations, condition the dynamics between the central state and local Catholic communities in novel ways. But these changes in historical context are also accompanied by striking continuities with the past patterns of conflict, resistance, and accommodation explored in this book. Rather than being marked by state-centered discourses of orthodoxy vs. heterodoxy or religion vs. superstition, the history of Fuan Catholics is dominated by a more substantial and long-standing set of dichotomies. In Mindong's society we continue to observe the tension between outsiders (officialdom) and insiders (locals), between the center (Beijing or

Fuzhou) and the periphery, between centripetal state control of local customs and centrifugal tendencies of local societies. These dynamics have characterized the history of the Mindong communities, as well as of many other religious groups in late imperial China, and continue to be important in modern times.

As we have seen in this book, during the late imperial period, local society and county officials went from an attitude of open confrontation to a *de facto* toleration of Christian activities, as Christian beliefs and practices successfully found a space in the field of *local* religious toleration, a field inhabited as well by other officially proscribed religious expressions. Although initially confrontational toward local social structures, after the advent of the Qing Mindong Christians and missionaries avoided directly challenging most of the ideological elements of local society, such as the supremacy of men in the kinship system or respect for elders and those in authority. They chose instead to selectively endorse Chinese ritual propriety or to reinterpret it in a Christian light. The external factors favoring toleration in Mindong were the weakness of state control at the subcounty level; the increasingly indifferent, even sympathetic, attitude of local elites and lineages toward Christians; and the weak response of the elite- and lineage-controlled structures of village religion to Christian activities. These elements equally contributed to the longevity of many other “heterodox” groups forbidden for ideological and political reasons at the central level. In 1903, the great Dutch ethnographer of southern Fujian, Jan Jacob Maria de Groot (1854–1921) observed the importance of personal and blood ties among local people in making prosecution of forbidden Buddhist groups difficult if not impossible. His astute assessment is worth quoting at length for its extraordinary relevance:

Although always a dangerous sword against the sects in the hands of the authorities, [the Law against Heresy] is a sword in its sheath. . . . Fortunately, in that land of veniality, it is not difficult for the sectaries to buy some sort of safety. And so the Law against Heresy virtually becomes a money-extorting instrument, worked especially, for their own profit, by lictors and yamen-runners. In many cases, greed and rapacity on the part of these people is the sole and direct cause of persecution. . . . To avert these always impending dangers, it is for every sect or parish a matter of high moment to count among its members relations of mandarins or of literary graduates, or better still, such persons themselves. The influence of one such man is often sufficient to hush persecution for years, and it may be taken for certain that most parishes avail themselves of this

happy circumstance to procure a considerable degree of safety. In the country-districts the sects doubtless enjoy more safety than in the towns. Indeed, in most villages the population is composed of members of one clan descended from a common stock; or of a few clans connected by intermarriage; and solidarity of family-life is strong enough in China to render it almost impossible for any member of such a community to find it in his heart to bring the others to grief by denouncing them to the authorities for a crime the criminality of which he does not even see. And the third article of the Law on Heresy, which threatens village-chiefs with punishment if they venture to hush up heresies in their jurisdiction, does not greatly tend to endanger the sects, the chiefs also being almost always members of the village-clan, maintained in their chieftainship by common consent of the rest. And so we necessarily arrive at the conclusion that the Chinese State with its rigorous anti-heretical legislation misses its great object, the extermination of heresies, but perfectly succeeds in making the sects often enough a prey of persecution and in exposing them constantly to fanatical and covetous passions, thus keeping them in perpetual anxiety and alarm. Doubtless, all this greatly fosters fraternization and solidarity among the members, a spirit of mutual help, devotion, and even sacrifice; virtues much furthered moreover by the general spirit of altruism which characterizes the Mahayana system. The dangers in which the sectaries live enhance their faith in the protection of their Saints, more particularly of Triratna, Awalokiteçwara and Matreya [sic]. Hence their high devoutness and piety, raised to a still higher pitch by the never-fading prospect of receiving one day a crown of martyrdom.

De Groot's anti-Confucian and anti-state vehemence was judged excessive even when he published his work. But what he observed at the end of the Qing period among Fujianese lay devotional groups easily applies to the experience of Fuan Christians vis-à-vis the Chinese state, past and present. If in the old days kinship loyalties and bribery sheltered Christians from state suppression, today those same kinship loyalties, as well as a sense of pride in their native place and in the traditions of Catholic resistance, continue to cement Catholic life in Mindong. New economic resources, moreover, are mobilized to pacify the government and build needed infrastructures for the community and society at large, in a balance that remains precarious but that has weathered decades of tension and repression.¹⁵

15. Quotation is from Groot 1903, 251. On Groot's aversion to Confucianism and his "conversion" from anti-clericalism to sympathy for the Christian missionary enterprise in China as reflected in his *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China* (1903), see Werblowsky 1986, 116–21; cf. also the "Introduction to the CMC Reprint Edition" by Inez de Beauclair and Harvey Molé in Groot 1977, vii–xxi.

China still retains strongly localized practices reflecting a diverse array of local power relations, economic conditions, and historical traditions. Different Catholic churches in disparate parts of the country display different experiences. In Guangdong, for example, peace prevails and overseas networks uncontroversially contribute to local community life, within an economically affluent society. In Tianjin municipality and surrounding Hebei province, however, the open and underground churches have a history of great tension, and factionalism dominates the mostly poor and inward-looking rural Catholic communities in the hinterland, whereas the richer and more “modern” communities found in urban centers are less fractious. In the mountains of Hubei, isolated rural communities remain guardians of ancient customs and, although accepting the Catholic Patriotic Association’s mediation role with the government, they conduct their daily business through local communitarian institutions.¹⁶

This book has presented a concrete and detailed example of the transformation of Christianity, a foreign world religion, into a *local* religion in China over the course of the late imperial period and into the present, beyond the theoretical straightjackets of interpretive frameworks such as imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism. The Mindong case highlights the importance of looking at specific local contexts and suggests that the fabric of each place and its people powerfully shapes the nature of local religious communities. On a broader plane, the experience of Mindong Christians also offers insights on the relationship between Chinese society and religion. In late imperial times, Christians in Mindong became part of an existing pluralistic *local* religious field. They continued to live within the boundaries of existing social conventions and kinship networks, but they also stretched the limits of local toleration for alternative ideas and practices. As Liu Kwang-ching and Richard Shek have observed, “a resilient and potent heterodox tradition did exist in China, . . . understood as an antinomian, countercultural and dissident value tradition that ultimately denied the existing order its legitimacy and immutability.” Catholics did not challenge the legitimacy of the entire Chinese social order, nor did they show particular concern for social change. But they certainly endorsed propositions that Liu and Shek would not hesitate to call “antinomian, countercul-

16. On Guangdong, see Lozada 2001; on Tianjin and Hebei, see Madsen 1998; on Hubei, see Kang 2006.

tural and dissident,” and they subtly influenced societal relations in Fuan, as they continue to do to this day. For the most part, however, it was not local society but the state that was, and continues to be, most worried about this “dissidence” and social tension. Hubert Seiwert reminds us that so-called sectarian groups developed with time a tendency “to accommodate to the surrounding society and to reduce tension,” as Catholics did in Mindong. He hastens to add that “ironically, . . . this normal development was to some degree obstructed by the government policy to repress sectarian groups without paying too much attention to the differences among them. In this way, even sects attempting to reduce tension remained heterodox and thus in relatively high tension, and were impeded in transforming into mainstream orthodox religious movements.”¹⁷

Distinguishing orthodoxy from heterodoxy and implementing suppression campaigns mattered most to the state and officialdom. The story of Mindong Catholics shows that in late imperial society the extent of social and religious toleration of “heterodoxy” was in fact remarkable in local arenas. A view from the local stage, as offered in this book and not just from the usual perspective of central officialdom and high elites, allows us to glimpse a different history, a history dictated not by the state alone but by local people as well.

17. Quotations are from Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek 2004, 465; and Seiwert 2003, 483.

Reference Matter

Note on Sources

This book employs several types of primary sources in Chinese and European languages on the Christian communities of Mindong. This note presents an overview of their nature and location.

The *Handbook of Christianity in China*, Vol. 1, 635–1800 (Standaert 2001) offers the best general introduction to the typology and location of Chinese and Western sources for the study of Christianity in China in late imperial times. The Chinese Christian Texts Database (CCT-Database, <http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/sinology/cct>), edited by Adrian Dudink and Nicolas Standaert at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium), includes descriptions of all existing Chinese texts of the pre-1800 Catholic China mission, as well as an updated bibliography of relevant secondary sources.

Volume 5 of José María González's *Historia de las misiones dominicanas de China* (1955–67) is a gateway to sources on the Dominican China mission in Fujian (mostly in Western languages) from the seventeenth century to 1950. The bulk of the primary materials is preserved in the Archivo de la Provincia del Santo Rosario (Archives of the Province of the Holy Rosary), for four centuries located in Manila, Philippines, and today partly transferred to Avila, Spain (Menegon 1994a). Other materials can be found in several archives in Rome (especially in the Archivum Generale Ordo Praedicatorum, the Biblioteca Casanatense, the Archivio Storico della Congregazione *De Propaganda Fide*, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), and elsewhere in Europe.

Existing primary sources on Mindong Catholic communities and local society can be categorized generally under the following rubrics:

Ming and Qing government materials (county-, provincial-, and central-level memorials, mostly preserved in the First Historical Archives of China in Beijing and at the National Palace Museum in Taipei);

Lineage genealogies, still in the hands of local families;

Gazetteers and inscriptions;

Chinese-language doctrinal materials (catechisms, moral and theological tracts);

Letters and reports in Chinese by local Christians;

Missionary internal reports and letters in European languages about local Christian activities and church policies to superiors and patrons in Manila and Europe;

Historical chronicles penned by Dominican historians and Chinese clergy from the seventeenth to the twentieth century for purposes of public consumption and identity-building;

Materials related to the Chinese Rites Controversy.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the historical actors who left these sources were representatives of different civilizing projects, all intent on transforming local minds and social habits. Ming and Qing government officials were interested in managing local religion and society and stamping out heterodoxy to maintain ideological and social control. Lineages and temple territorial organizations had their own overlapping agendas of local control, not always in harmony with those of the state, and variously hostile, indifferent, or tolerant toward Christians. European missionaries and Chinese priests aimed at inculcating Christian values, creating religious identity, and maintaining standardized Christian practices among their faithful, while peddling to their superiors and their financial backers outside China the orthodoxy and devotion of their communities.

As in the case of any religious community, be it Buddhist, Daoist, or Christian, most of the sources come from clergy and practitioners of the faith. The unavoidable apologetic overtones of some of these primary sources can be both a hindrance to and a resource for the modern scholar. Statements must be sifted and compared with those found in competing kinds of sources (for example, comparing the account of a

government crackdown on the faithful both in government memorials and in Christian sources), but even openly hagiographic accounts are precious testimony of the religious spirit and social views that inspired early modern individuals.

One example may serve to illustrate the challenges and opportunities of missionary sources. “*Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de la China*” (Feats of the Order of Preachers in the empire of China, 1667) by Victorio Riccio (1621–85) is a manuscript chronicle of the history of the Dominican mission of Fujian. It is rich in unique historical details, as well as in vignettes of Christian life and exemplary biographies.¹ The “*Hechos*” are in fact a “collective hagiography,” a series of edifying biographies of priests and lay Christian women and men set against the historical and social context of Fujian between 1632 and the late 1650s. Riccio, besides relying on his own testimony, derived his vision of the mission from other contemporary hagiographies detailing the life of holy friars and exemplary Christians in Fuan, as well as from a set of juridical documents produced in 1650 on the occasion of the ordinary process for the beatification as a martyr of the Dominican Francisco Capillas, who lost his life in 1648 during the Manchu occupation of Fuan.

A look at Riccio’s “Preface to the Reader” makes apparent the hagiographic intent of the work. The “*Hechos*” are conceived as a celebration of the heroic feats of the Dominican order in China, so that “oblivion [may not] fall upon the illustrious acts of [these] religious heroes, of [these] great propagators of the evangelic light and singular promoters of the Christian religion” (f. 1r). From the Later Middle Ages on, hagiographies were usually produced as part of the preparations for a formal canonization. The search for heroic virtues was at the core of canonization processes in the Counter-Reformation, and the heroic ideal is certainly one of the main motifs of the “*Hechos*.”²

The second purpose outlined in the preface is “edification and guidance” (*espejo y escuela*) for the prospective missionaries who represented

1. The “*Hechos*” have survived in three copies, all kept in the APSR. The first two copies are the original (503 folios) and the “*borrador*” (draft; only 430 folios are still legible); the third one is a nineteenth-century copy, made for the archives of the church of San Gabriel in the Paríán (393 folios), with some copying errors, but rather more legible, which I have used; see GH, 5: 62. On Riccio, see José María González 1955 and Wills 1980.

2. De Maio 1973.

a large part of the readership for such works. In its propagandistic function, the chronicle was to be diffused among recruits for the missions, as well as ecclesiastical and civil authorities supporting the missionary effort, both in Spain and in the Philippines. To inspire younger candidates to follow the glorious missionary enterprise was certainly one of the main aims of missionary narratives. In the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus alone, there are 14,000 *Indipetae* (letters by young Jesuits petitioning to go to the “Indies”), which bear witness to the attraction of the heroic ideal of the missionary.

The young Riccio himself—a promising graduate of St. Thomas College in the Minerva Dominican priory in Rome, with a professorship of philosophy awaiting for him in Fiesole—remarked with some pride that he had been “the first to volunteer” for the mission to East Asia when the occasion had come in 1644.³ The attractions of a “hazardous mission” in Asia had probably been nurtured by reading the letters of his confreres in the Philippines, as well as by the urgings of the procurators sent from time to time to Europe to recruit new missionaries. Moreover, the Dominicans were among the more prolific religious orders in producing hagiographic works exalting their own members, and a number of the texts published in Spain in the seventeenth century related the stories of the martyrs of Asia.⁴ As noted by André Vauchez for the Later Middle Ages, clerics and nuns of the time, “by dint of pouring over these texts, . . . were eventually permeated by them, and they took from them, for example, their zeal for asceticism and virginity.”⁵ Thus it is not surprising that avid readers of missionary hagiographies should try to imitate the lives of those they read about. As we have seen, Chinese-language hagiographies had the same function among Mindong Christians and *beatas*. Another sector of the audience for works like the “Hechos” might have been the official establishment in Madrid and Manila responsible for the sustained economic support to the Dominican Province through the institution of the Spanish *Patronato Real*. To justify funding, the friars had to show positive results. Thus, Dominican missionaries in China kept scrupulous annual records of the numbers of baptisms and communions.

3. José María González 1955, 9n6.

4. Sánchez Lora 1988, 393.

5. Vauchez 1997, 533.

Following this assertion of hagiographic intent, however, the preface introduces in its second half a sharp change in tone as Riccio articulates some compositional criteria that we might label “historico-critical.” These seem to be at odds with the essence of hagiography. He not only declares his preference for simplicity in style, a fact confirmed by his use of Spanish, a language “chaste and simple, grave and devout,”⁶ but also expresses a desire to shun exaggerations. In writing his work, he explicitly appeals to the standards of historical works (*codices*), as opposed to “dreams and fables”:

We will spare our readers all exaggerated praises, since exaggerated histories cause prolixity, which is the mother of boredom; we will also avoid [relating] what is uncertain and doubtful, since historical treatises, which are constant and eternal witnesses of truth, strip dreams and fables of their beauty and are the declared enemies of these. What was hidden from my eyes by time and my absence was shown to me by very reliable relations and original letters, some written by those to whom things happened, some by eyewitnesses.

Here Riccio seems to be reacting to the ridicule heaped by Protestants on the lives of saints from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Such a sober and “scientific” approach, which had its more mature expression in the enterprise of “critical hagiography” initiated by the Bollandists in 1643, was also encouraged by a recent turn to a juridical approach in the canonization process and a greater emphasis on documentary accuracy.⁷ Whereas previous historical works of the Holy Rosary Province abounded in “revelations, prophetic spirits, miracles, arduous deeds and impulses to martyrdom,”⁸ the narrative of Riccio is indeed more restrained, generally careful in reporting names and dates and sometimes quoting documents verbatim. More important for the purposes of this book, Riccio includes among the exemplars of the mission numerous Chinese lay Christians, a group that represents a rather neglected minority in the history of sainthood in the West. Riccio’s appeal to sobriety and his recourse to eyewitness accounts to guarantee the truthfulness of his chronicle may also have been a conventional formula of authentication well established by his time and dating back to the first accounts of the “marvels” of the New World. European readers, accustomed to

6. Castilian was so characterized in the first history of the Dominican Province of the Holy Rosary; see “Aprobación” in Aduarte 1962–63, 1: 7.

7. Certau 1968, 207; Grégoire 1987, 35–36.

8. “Aprobación,” in Aduarte 1962–63, 1: 7.

discounting the hyperbolic descriptions of medieval *mirabilia*, had often received with skepticism the descriptions and representations of the “wonders of the New World” and the “shock of discovery” by chroniclers of the conquest.⁹

My reading of substantial parts of the “Hechos” confirms the overlapping of genres anticipated in Riccio’s preface: history constantly contends with hagiography for narrative space. For Riccio there was no question of different narrative modes, a problem that is more a modern preoccupation. Since the “feats” of the Dominicans and their converts were expressions of a providential plan of salvation, both history and hagiography could be employed to represent the struggle between the power of God and his preachers on one hand and the obstacles posed by the devil, assuming the forms of anti-Christian foes, on the other. At a stroke, all forms of Chinese religion, be they Buddhist, Daoist, or popular, were reduced to idolatry and associated with the enemies of the faith, in a twist typical in the stories of Christian martyrs.¹⁰ Descriptions of conflict abound in Spanish missionary sources. As we have seen, Fuan was the site of the friars’ “discovery” of ancestral rituals and the geographical focus of the first phase in the Chinese Rites Controversy. One could say that the friars’ narratives are fundamentally “narratives of conflict.” They often describe physical attacks against the missionaries and their converts, male abuse of young women or spouses who converted, destruction of church or private property, legal disputes in the county or subprefectural *yamen*, and so on. However, understanding the reasons for the conflict described in those narratives is a complex matter. The friars offered depictions of Chinese contexts that they understood to a limited degree, and only through their own mental schemes. It thus becomes important to understand the “cultural baggage” of the missionary observer, to comprehend why an event or practice was described in certain terms. Authorship, readership, aims, and literary genre of the sources have to be taken into account.

9. See Greenblatt 1991 and Grafton 1992.

10. Certau 1968, “Hagiographie,” 208, observes that in hagiographies of martyrdom—and most of Riccio’s exemplars fall within this category—the life of the martyr is articulated through the relationship between Christians and anti-Christians. In this kind of hagiography “[the] minority nature [of the Christian community] produces apologies of martyrdom, narrations of struggle with the social figures of the devil, and the concurrently polemical and admonitory nature typical of the hagiographic discourse.”

An understanding of the sources' inner fabric can in turn help us read through and beyond literary conventions and Western mental schemes. When a contradiction or an oddity that remains opaque in meaning emerges in the text, then we have a potential fissure of the narrative. A search for the meaning of those textual disjunctures, which William Henry Scott calls "cracks in the parchment curtain," can be rewarding. It is through those cracks, and through the auxiliary use of traditional Chinese sources and modern studies on Chinese social structure and religion, that one can attempt a decipherment of those conflicts, which, as Erik Zürcher has pointed out, often are paradigmatic of "fundamental issues of Chinese culture."¹¹

I would characterize these cracks as belonging to two categories. The first are "historical cracks." With patient detective work, they can often be pried open. Discrepant voices from the past come to our rescue: on one hand, we have correspondence from other missionaries in the field; on the other, Chinese-language sources, sometimes by Chinese Christians, sometimes by anti-Christian writers, or government agencies. I would call the second and more elusive category "ethnographic cracks." They are descriptions of phenomena in the religious and social spheres that must be understood in the context of the structure of local society, especially at the popular level. The adoption of an ethnographic approach can contribute to our understanding of the ways converts in Fuan experienced Christianity, while remaining part of their locale. Both historical criticism and ethnographic analysis have undergirded the writing of this book.

11. Quotation from Zürcher 1995, 266. See Scott 1982, where "cracks" are a reference to fragments of pre-Hispanic history found in Spanish documents. For a masterful study of the Spanish missionary imagination and ethnography, and their relationship to native reality in colonial contexts, see MacCormack 1991.

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