

Liangtou she: Mingmo Qingchu de diyi dai Tianzhujiatou 兩頭蛇：明末清初的第一代天主教徒

HUANG YINONG 黃一農 (Huang Yi-long). Xinzhu: Guoli Qinghua Daxue chubanshe, 2005. xi. 557 pages. ISBN 957-29880-8-5. NT\$750.00 hardcover.

According to scientists, the estimated occurrence of a two-headed snake is 1 in 10,000. Some preserved specimens are today kept in museums, and in 2003 the media reported the finding of one such “freak” by an eight-year old in Kentucky (USA). An albino two-headed snake lived in captivity for some years at the World Aquarium in St. Louis (Missouri, USA), and was recently put on sale for a large sum.

This rare phenomenon was recorded in ancient China as well. As recounted in Wang Chong's 王充 *Lunheng* 論衡, Sunshu Ao 孫叔敖, future prime minister of King Zhuang of the state of Chu (楚莊王, r. 613-591 BCE), while walking as a child, encountered a two-headed snake. According to current belief, this was a sign of imminent death. Sunshu Ao selflessly killed the animal and buried it to save others from that fate. In the end, he did not die, but in fact proceeded to a meteoric political career.

Wang Chong used the story to criticize the superstitions of his times. Yet, as the publicity surrounding the recent findings of two-headed snakes shows, this strange natural phenomenon still fascinates and terrifies us, just as it did in China. In his book *Two-Headed Snakes: The First Generation of Catholics in the Late Ming and Early Qing Periods*, Huang Yi-long employs the expression as a metaphor for the conflicted meaning of being a Chinese Catholic in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Huang (p. vii) refers to a poem by the late Ming Catholic literatus Sun Yuanhua 孫元化, written after a member of his household sighted a two-headed snake. In the poem, Sun identifies with the freak animal. Rather than being horrified, he sympathizes with the snake's aimless meandering, its being pulled in two directions, and its existential contradiction, whereby the two heads “find it difficult to move together all their life, yet they cannot separate one inch the entire time.” According to Huang Yi-long, here Sun might be referring to his attempts to reconcile Catholicism and Confucianism in his life, and to bridge the divide between the two different moral systems.

The attempt to capture the human and the intellectual dramas of Chinese Catholic literati is the thread running through the book, linking a series of case studies, partly published in several periodicals (especially in the *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies*) over the last decade. After a first introductory background chapter on the history of Catholic missions in the age of exploration, Chapter Two analyzes the adoption of Catholicism as a “complement to Confucianism and a replacement of Buddhism” by Qu Rukui 瞿汝夔, an early learned convert of Matteo Ricci S.J. Chapter Three details the dialogue between Ricci and contemporary literati. The following three chapters examine the stories of Wang Zheng 王徵, Wei Xuelian 魏學濂, and Han Lin 韓霖, three prominent late Ming Christian literati, and the incidents of conflict and accommodation in their lives after conversion. Chapter Seven considers the Christian elements in the late Ming community compact *Duoshu* 鐸書 (Book of

Admonitions), penned by Han Lin. Chapter Eight continues an exploration of the Catholic lineage of Han Lin in the region of Jiangzhou 絳州, Shanxi 山西. Chapters Nine and Ten discuss the attitude towards Christianity of important officials and members of the imperial family in the Southern Ming regimes. Chapters Eleven and Twelve detail the reaction of Chinese Catholic literati to the struggles surrounding the famous Chinese Rites Controversy (an ideological struggle between Rome and Beijing over the acceptability of ancestral rituals for Christians).

Two-Headed Snakes provides rich insight into the life of late imperial Christian literati. The book is based on painstaking research in collected works, *biji* 筆記, Christian tracts, and local materials kept in Taiwanese, Chinese, and European collections, a job only partly facilitated by recent advances in digitization of Chinese rare books. New genealogical and biographical information on Christian literati and their immediate families, supplemented by fieldwork in Mainland China, is one of the most notable contributions of Huang's research to Chinese-Christian prosopography, greatly advancing our knowledge of the connections between individuals and their social, intellectual, and religious networks. The volume's apparatus, including a chronological table of main events, a list of missionaries' names and bio-dates, a rich bibliography, and a general index of book titles and personal names, facilitates cross-references, necessary to clarify the workings of these social networks.

The book, however, mainly relies on late Ming materials, and we are left longing for more connections to the early Qing period mentioned in the subtitle, including the reigns of the Shunzhi 順治 and Kangxi 康熙 emperors. While we learn from Huang that the descendants of some major converts forsook Christianity, probably finding its moral absolutes unbearable, we are also told that some families remained in the faith: What is their story in the Qing period? We get a sense of the developments within the Christian community in Qing China only in the chapters on the Chinese Rites Controversy, which, however, are not fully connected with the stories of late Ming Christians in preceding chapters.

The final chapter offers a general evaluation of the tensions within the lives of late Ming Christian literati, and social explanations for the withering away of literati interest in Christianity. Huang starts with an analysis of the emblematic conundrum of concubinage, mentions the Christian prohibition of suicide (even when faced with military dishonor), and goes on to discuss the problems surrounding ancestral cults and the terminology for God in Chinese. He observes that after the Ming period, many descendants of famous Christian literati chose to abandon the church and lost interest in the "Celestial Teachings" partly because of the social and cultural demands of conversion in matters related to marriage and ancestral rites.

At the same time, Huang observes, the controversy over ritual matters produced unexpected effects as well. On the one hand, it excited interest for China in European learned circles, and it stimulated the birth of Western sinology. On the other hand, it contributed to driving Christians underground in China. This produced a Chinese-Catholic subculture in rural areas, where special accommodated rituals and customs have sometimes been preserved up to this day, and forced the Church to send young Chinese men to Macao, Siam, the Philippines, and Europe for training as future leaders of the underground church. The final

result was a more “indigenized” Catholic church. Yet later developments (in particular the negative effects on church membership due to the Rites Controversy) slowed the indigenization, a phenomenon that Huang sees emerging again in the contemporary period, partly due to the antagonism between the Vatican and the PRC government. It is in the latter part of this synthetic concluding chapter that we perceive again a disconnection between the rich research and the conclusions on the late Ming period that make up the bulk of the book, and the relatively light-weight parts covering the Qing and modern periods.

This volume is no doubt one of the best works on the history of late Ming Christianity in any language to be published in the last few decades. It should be acquired by any serious sinological library, and carefully read not only by historians of Chinese Christianity, but also by social historians of late imperial China with interests in intellectual history, history of science, religion, and gender studies.

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The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism in Eighth- through Tenth-Century China

JINHUA JIA. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006. xv, 220 pages. ISBN 0-7914-6823-2. US\$65.00 hardcover.

Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709-788) and his heirs in the next several generations, who are collectively known as the Hongzhou 洪州 school of Chan Buddhism, are presented here as a turning point in Chan 禪 history. While the school appropriated and refined the lineage assertions of Shenhui 神會 (684-758), it rejected Shenhui’s *prajñāpāramita* notions based on the *Diamond Sūtra* and reverted to the earlier Chan emphases on the *tathāgatagarbha* (*rulaizang* 如來藏) and the *Lankāvātāra Sūtra*, but pushed the latter theories to their ultimate conclusions and attempted to resolve some of their ambiguities.

Professor Jia’s book researches thoroughly the lives of Daoyi and a number of his heirs, their texts, doctrines, and rise to orthodoxy. This is followed by an annotated translation, together with Chinese characters, of the surviving fragments of the discourses of Daoyi that arguably date from his time and that of his immediate students. Jia has attempted to use only material that can be dated to this period and is not contaminated by later rewriting. Heavy reliance is placed on stele inscriptions, including those referred to and used by the *Song*