

ASIAN INTERACTIONS AND COMPARISONS

Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition

East Asia from Ming to Qing

Edited by Lynn A. Struve

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CHAPTER FIVE

The “Teachings of the Lord of Heaven” in Fujian

Between Two Worlds and Two Times

Eugenio Menegon

IN AN EXTRAORDINARY POEM, the seventeenth-century painter, poet, and eventually Jesuit father Wu Li describes his sense of dislocation upon waking in unfamiliar surroundings:

At the tips of red lichee branches
the moon again goes west;
I rise and watch
the wind-swept dew,
My eyes still all confused.
Before the lamp, this place is not
a scholar's studio:
I only hear the sound of bells,
I hear no rooster's crow.¹

In the deep south, where lichee abounds, he opens his eyes after a night's rest with his senses still heavy and confused. It is the new moon. In the flickering light of a lamp, he realizes that the usual objects and the walls of his scholar's studio, which he perhaps expected to find at his rise, are not there. Neither is the comforting, certainly familiar sound of the rooster's crow. Instead, he has been awakened by the striking of “self-sounding bells,” that is, by a mechanical Western clock.

Religious Temporality in China and Europe

Indeed, Wu Li was not in his scholar's studio in his native Changshu (Jiangsu Province) when writing this poem between 1681 and 1688. Rather, he was residing in the Jesuit residence of Macao, where, as a member of the Society of Jesus, he was taking courses in Western philosophy and Catholic theology in preparation for his priestly ordination. This rare Chinese observer of Western lifestyles in Macao was clearly struck by the lack of natural time markers (roosters) and by the presence in their stead of mechanical devices (chiming clocks) to measure the hours. He must have been familiar with the tolling of bells or the beating of drums to mark time in Chinese cities, but probably the scholar's studio he referred to, as the poetic topos required, would have been in some rustic retreat where life flowed easily and slowly, and where such sounds normally would not be heard. In contrast, he elsewhere noted how his daily life of study as a Jesuit novice in Macao was rigidly disciplined by the clock.²

Wu Li's reflection on his waking stupor reminds us, as David Landes has noted, that the subdivision of time in hours, minutes, and seconds is far from being "natural." Indeed, more stringent conceptions of time were mainly limited to urban centers, both in China and the West, where mechanical time-keeping devices were required for security night watches and the precise measurement of labor. In fact, scheduling in hours, minutes, and subminutes, as well as a need and desire for precision, diffused beyond urban centers only after the introduction of railways in the West in the 1840s.³

In the countryside of China or Europe, where the vast majority of people lived in premodern times, the meaning of time was rather different from ours. In rural Europe, until the mid-sixteenth century most people contented themselves with identifying the middle of the day, either by looking at the sun or by listening to the bells of a nearby church. Similarly, in the countryside of China the sun dictated the daily rhythms of activity and rest, while the occasional tolling of the bell of a Buddhist monastery or the sound of the night watch in a walled county seat would mark the passing of time only for those people residing in the vicinity.⁴ What truly mattered to most rural folk was not so much the micromanagement of time but knowledge of important dates in the annual cycle. That cycle, it is important to underline, was mainly a cultic one. While people at large were aware of the linear progression of time, from the birth of Christ or the creation of

the world in Europe, the date of the al-Hijra in the Muslim world, or the beginning of a reign in a given dynasty in China, what they experienced in daily life was the temporal circularity of rituals, calendrically linked to the lunations.⁵

In Western Christendom, the main orientation through the year was offered by the celebration of major feasts like Easter or Christmas, by the weekly recurrence of the *dies dominica* (Lord's Day), and by the feasts of saints, whose position in time was often linked to important agricultural moments of the season. Besides these landmark dates, precise dating linked to the astronomical year remained the preserve of a small literate public of clerics, government officials, and urban dwellers, who could read and employ books of hours or astrological almanacs. In fact, absolute astronomical dates, as opposed to relative recurrences linked to the liturgical year of the church, did not become commonly used until the second half of the sixteenth century, when printed almanacs began to have wide distribution. However, most people in the countryside continued to mark their time through the liturgical calendar well into the eighteenth century (Maiello 1994: chap. 8). The prominence of the liturgical calendar in Europe clearly indicates the pivotal role the church had as the keeper of time. Benedictine monks, following the Roman system, introduced the division of time in "hours" to mark their rhythm of work, study, and prayer, and it was a pope who issued in 1582 the calendar that we still use today. Starting in the Middle Ages, secular powers vied with the church for control over time but with limited success. Even the radical attempt of French authorities, in the period from 1793 to 1806, to introduce a new non-Christian calendar based on *décades* and thus to erase any influence of the church on the collective mind of the people, failed in no small measure because of resistance by staunch Catholic peasants and urban women, who would not renounce the weekly rhythms and the recurrent liturgies they had grown up with (Le Goff 1980; Zerubavel 1981: 82–97).

Also in the countryside of China, the toils of agriculture were punctuated by festivals in the rich cycle of the lunar year—some of empirewide import, others local.⁶ As observed by Jean DeBernardi, this cycle still provides the "primary temporal framework which orders the practice of Chinese religious culture," offering a rhythm of reunion, fostering communal identity, and structuring a cosmological framework for human experience (1992: 261). Being a cycle of celebrations in honor of gods, spirits, and ancestors, it can be compared

to the Christian liturgical calendar of celebrations, although it would be improper to call it a liturgical cycle, since, unlike in Christianity, the Chinese cycle is a composite and all-inclusive one, not depending on any one set of liturgical texts or rites.⁷ Emperors, divinized imperial officials, Buddhist and Daoist deities, folk deities, and ancestral spirits—all are celebrated at some point in the year. There is no single authority that decides who should be included. Instead a centuries-long stratification of different local religious traditions has yielded a calendar rich in regional variations, which in this respect is similar to the local religious calendars of the medieval West before uniformity was ordered by Rome in the sixteenth century.

However, unlike in Europe, calendrical and astronomical matters in China were tightly controlled by the imperial state, not by any "church." Astronomy was a science monopolized by the court because of its important cosmological function, and the private compilation of calendars was formally forbidden (Smith 1991: 39, 74–75). The early Qing period was in fact a very important moment in the history of Chinese astronomy and the imperial calendar. For the Manchu dynasty, a precise calendar was not only a crucial sign of legitimacy, but also a matter of proper cosmological ordering of the world (*tianxia*). It is thus not surprising that in the early years of the Kangxi reign control over the calendar and its mantic dimensions became an area of contention between indigenous astronomers and the Jesuits charged with astronomical reform.⁸

Starting in the late Ming period, the Jesuits introduced new astronomical computation methods, which had great impact on the way experts calculated calendrical time. However, as the disputes in which the Jesuit astronomer Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666) became entangled demonstrate, such computational astronomy only increased the accuracy of the Chinese calendar; it did not change its cosmological rationale or its basic structure. Indeed, as was the case in Europe with the liturgical calendar, the function of almanacs (an elaboration on the basic structure of the imperially sanctioned calendar) in Chinese daily life was not so much the measuring of absolute time but, on one hand, the selection of auspicious and inauspicious days for agricultural work or conducting business and family functions (hemerology) and, on the other, the classification of the days on which rituals to ancestors, gods, or spirits should be celebrated. In other words, almanacs were in some sense the most basic "liturgical texts" of the Chinese: they not only were the ordering instruments of the ritual cycle but

also, by virtue of the mantic arts they expounded and encouraged, were a compass to rely on in the complicated geomantic and cosmological landscape of daily life, inhabited as it was by spiritual entities and forces.

It was particularly the mantic component of almanacs that provoked disputes and debates among early Christian missionaries. Schall, who became employed in the Qing Imperial Directorate of Astronomy, was forced to rebuff accusations from opponents in the Catholic camp that he was helping in the production of a "superstitious" calendar, which would have been used by millions of Chinese to mark auspicious and inauspicious days. The Jesuit argued that he was responsible only for the mathematical accuracy of the calendar and that he could not prevent the imperial government from employing the native cosmology in its "superstitious parts" to dictate appropriate times for activities. Although Chinese divination and hemerology occasionally had been employed by Schall out of expediency, such practices were definitely opposed by the Jesuits and their literati converts.⁹ Schall felt obliged, around 1662, to compose a treatise on popular calendars (*Minli puzhu jiehuo*) to clarify his position, and in 1670 Ferdinand Verbiest SJ (1623–1688), Schall's successor in the Directorate of Astronomy, authored at least three short books against the "superstitious" practices of geomancy (or, more precisely, siting), hemerology, and astrology, all of which were connected to the calendar.¹⁰ Moreover, a number of works by Chinese converts, especially in the early Qing period, attacked divination and hemerology.¹¹ It might not be happenstance that most of these treatises remained unpublished: in the end, in spite of crucial postings at court, the Jesuits were unable to challenge native divinatory practices.

As observed by Richard J. Smith, institutional religious groups were in no position to undermine such ancient traditions: "Chinese monks and priests did not have the institutional power to challenge longstanding mantic traditions, even if they had the will, for the Buddhist and Daoist establishment in China remained ever subordinate to the imperial Confucian state" (1991: 270). To the contrary, the Daoist and Buddhist establishments probably endorsed mantic practices and were instrumental in having important religious festivals of their respective traditions included in the almanacs. Even when political power was used to force the adoption of a new calendar and the shedding of mantic practices, as happened with the radical introduction of a new Christian-inspired calendar (including a sabbath day and devoid of

connection to the old astrology and deities) by the Taiping regime in the 1860s, popular reaction was negative.¹² The Jesuits indeed had no hope of influencing the popular use of the calendar, and even the rejection of any relation between the calendar and native mantic practices by some rationalistic Chinese scientists like Mei Wending (1633–1721) in the late Kangxi period did not hinder their flourishing.¹³

While missionaries and some converts attempted in their writings to undermine the authority of Chinese mantic practices, they did not show any interest in challenging the Chinese way of reckoning daily time. After all, the Chinese luni-solar calendar could be seen as a simple "shell" that by itself did not engender any superstitious practices. Thus, Christian converts were never asked to reject "Chinese time" in favor of "Western time." In spite of official prohibition, popular calendars were privately produced all over China, and the ubiquity of almanacs could hardly be reduced by the imperial government, let alone by a handful of Christian astronomers in Beijing.¹⁴ The solution for missionaries was not to try to suppress popular almanacs but to assure that converts would not follow their superstitious prescriptions. Thus, Chinese Christians were asked to undertake a subtle shift in temporality, which potentially had important implications for their lives. Although the Chinese luni-solar calendar continued to mark the days for converts, Christianity superimposed on the old calendar a new temporal rhythm: the rhythm of the Christian liturgical calendar. Thus, while at the court the Jesuit control over time was disputed by native scholars, in the countryside of China, where Christian communities existed, a new set of liturgical occurrences, determined by neither imperial sanction nor native tradition but by an alien tradition and a calendar calculated in Rome, subjected the native ritual calendar and its associated social processes to a series of contestations and negotiations.

The Sociology of Time: Liturgical Calendars as Social Markers in the West and in China

To illustrate the importance of this novelty in the Chinese context, it is instructive to look at the function of liturgical calendars in creating separate communities of believers in the Mediterranean and to contrast that to what happened in the adoption of those same calendrical cycles in late-Ming and early-Qing China. As will become clear below, the exclusivist claims of the Christian calendar over the ritual life of the Chinese village resulted in partial segregation of converts from cur-

rent social practices, but it also generated a wide range of negotiations between Christian and Chinese temporal practices.

The "sociologist of time" Eviatar Zerubavel has pointed out how religious calendars in the three great Religions of the Book (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) performed an extremely important role in separating the minority group of believers from the vast numbers of unbelievers at first, while becoming the deep structure of daily life once minority became majority. The foundational unit of the Christian calendar, the week (a nonastronomical and absolutely unnatural unit), in the main is a Jewish invention, and some major feasts in the Christian calendar (such as Easter from Passover) are indeed of Jewish derivation. In the Jewish tradition, respect for the sabbath, the day of rest that memorializes the end of creation by God, is in fact so strict that any work or activity is absolutely forbidden on that day. It is easy to understand how powerful such religious prohibitions of time use can be in shaping the daily life of believers. Christians first, in the Roman empire, and Muslims later, in early-Islamic Arabia, decided to adopt the week in their fight against pagan rhythms. However, they also selected as their sabbath a different day than had the Jews: Sunday—that is, the *dies dominica*, the Lord's Day—for the Christians, and Friday for the Muslims. The Christians, moreover, starting probably around 120 CE, set the date of Easter on a different day from the Jewish Passover, declaring heretical those who would continue the celebration on the same day.

These choices in distancing the holy days of the three religious traditions historically meant that whenever the three communities, which had many tenets in common, came into contact, they were obliged by the temporal rhythm of their own liturgical calendars to segregate themselves from each other (Zerubavel 1981: 71; and 1982). In the Mediterranean monotheistic traditions the separation between sacred and profane, a concept sanctioned by Durkheim and Eliade, seems indeed quite stark. Perhaps for this reason the classical sociology of religion has shown little interest in exploring areas of negotiation. In the case of China, foreign religions had to reach compromises between their sacred pretensions and the surrounding world, and thus to engage in an array of ritual and social negotiations. In the Chinese context, this phenomenon was more pronounced for Judaism and Islam, while for Christianity it appears to have been more limited.

Jewish and Muslim enclaves existed in the territory of China proper (that is, apart from the large Muslim populations of the North-

west and Yunnan) at least from the Song dynasty onward (see chapter 2 in this volume by Roger Des Forges). Although I am not aware of the survival of a Sino-Judaic calendar, it is clear from extant scriptures that the calculation of liturgical time was of utmost importance to the Jewish community of Kaifeng, which wished to celebrate the various festivals at the appropriate time.¹⁵ In a 1663 stele Jewish leaders noted the way in which Yom Kippur, the most holy day, was celebrated: "At the end of autumn [the Jews] close their doors for a whole day, give themselves up to the cultivation of purity, and cut themselves off entirely from food and drink in order to nourish the higher nature. On that day the scholar interrupts his readings and studies; the farmer suspends his work of ploughing or reaping; the tradesman ceases to do business in the market; and the traveler stops on his way" (quoted in Pollak 1980: 293). This is an apparent manifestation of the sabbath law prescribing religious celebrations that clearly set the Jews apart from their Han neighbors. Scholars believe that the schedule of annual worship in Kaifeng was the same as that adopted by the Persian Jews. But important changes occurred in China. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ancestral rituals were introduced in the Jewish liturgy, and they were performed exactly at the time of the seasonal rituals performed by Chinese at large, in particular at Qingming (3rd month) and at the Festival of Hungry Ghosts (7th month). Meanwhile, in ways that became more accentuated in the eighteenth century, numerous Jewish observances were slowly abandoned. Andrew Plaks observes, for instance, that on Jewish stelae of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the weekly sabbath is no longer emphasized.¹⁶

Written liturgical calendars were certainly used in Islamic communities.¹⁷ In 1730 the Yongzheng emperor himself, while defending Muslims from the accusations of a high Han official, observed that "the Hui people have always followed the orthodox [i.e., imperial] calendar, but the official accuses them of doing otherwise merely because they have their private method of reckoning time."¹⁸ From this statement we learn that the emperor, while recognizing that the Muslims had their own ways of measuring time (i.e., mainly liturgical/religious time), also understood that they accepted the framework offered by the imperial government and kept their own calendars as a "private matter" for internal circulation. Indeed, especially in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, that is, before the rise of the so-called New Teaching "heresy" in the late Qianlong reign, the Muslim leadership in China proper showed a great eagerness to adjust to Chinese

ways, as attested both by their writings in Chinese and by their participation in the civil and military examination systems. Hui people in relatively isolated Muslim enclaves like Quanzhou (Fujian), which have only recently been re-Islamized, always maintained a remembrance of their ancestry and some core elements of their identity, but until the 1980s they ate pork and celebrated Chinese festivals and ancestor reverence on the same dates as their non-Muslim neighbors.¹⁹

These examples indicate that Jewish and Muslim religious calendars did not exist in isolation from the larger temporal framework imposed by the Chinese lunar calendar. As minority communities vis-à-vis the Han populace, Jews and Muslims could not cut themselves off from their social surroundings. For example, a Muslim calendar would attach to the corresponding Arabic names of the months the precise times of the beginnings of the meteorological and astrological dates of the Chinese luni-solar calendrical periods (see Farjanel and Bouvat 1908). Thus, it was the case that the Chinese luni-solar calendar, not the Muslim lunar calendar, was the pivot of time for Muslims in Han-dominated society. Moreover, the dates of major Chinese festivals became the ones on which important Jewish festivals were celebrated, and both Jews and Muslims living amidst Han majorities started forgetting their own customs and ritual cycles and adopting Chinese festivals. The lack of an effective clerical leadership conversant in the sacred languages and knowledgeable about rituals and scriptures was certainly a factor in the loss of ethnic and religious memory.

Christian Calendars in Ming and Qing China

Like Jews and Muslims, Christian converts remained part of Chinese society and shared some of its religious conventions. However, unlike in the isolated Jewish and Muslim communities referred to above, foreign missionaries emphasized the capital importance of the Christian liturgical cycle and the attached obligations of believers. In turn, this emphasis determined changes in the temporality of the converts' lives and had a definite impact on their social interactions with society at large. The Christians, like others, went through a shift from one dynasty to another and thus experienced both Ming and Qing time—politically. But in addition, the religious experience of Christians became located at the sociocultural intersection of "two worlds," and Christians found themselves positioned between two times in that sense as well. To the time organized around the agricultural year

and the festivals and ritual cycles in honor of ancestors, gods, and spirits that marked rural life, Chinese Christians added—more often substituted—a new set of church devotions organized in a fixed temporal order, disciplined not only by liturgical calendars but also by fasting schedules.

In the following pages I will examine how this positioning between two worlds and two times affected the lives of Christians in a locale of southern China, Fuan (Fujian Province; see Map 2, inset), where a strict form of orthodox Catholicism was introduced by Spanish Dominican friars in the seventeenth century. More specifically, I will try to show through my case study how Chinese Christians in their daily lives negotiated between the religious and social beliefs temporally structured by the indigenous cycle of the lunar year and the new Christian obligations and devotional practices ordered according to the liturgical time introduced by missionaries. I will concentrate on some devotional practices—penance, fasting, and the recitation of the rosary—that, although disciplined by the Christian calendar and new to China, resonated with long-established, native religious traditions. These devotions introduced to the lives of Christians new temporal rhythms, but at the same time, in their contents, they resembled practices found in Buddhism and popular religion.

By exploring the range of negotiations over religious practice and religious time in the Christian community of Fuan during the formative years of the Ming-Qing transition, I aim to show how Fuan Christians concretely shaped their familial and religious practices within the framework of a "Chinese-Christian time" in the climate of general religious tolerance of the Kangxi reign and how, once it took root, Christianity continued to influence converts' "lived time" into the period of anti-Christian prohibition (the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns). In doing so, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the ways Christian converts in a popular milieu and in a local context "acted out" their religious faith, an area of investigation that has been little explored.²⁰

Christianity in Fuan

The Christian experience in Fuan was a distinctive one. While most of the Christian communities of China in the late Ming and early Qing were under the control of Jesuits, Fuan was a Dominican mission. Missionaries who had reached China by the 1630s exclusively belonged to the Jesuit order, but after 1632, owing to a reversal of papal policy in

1600, other Catholic religious groups started to evangelize in China. Thus, in the final decade of the Ming dynasty, friars of the Dominican and Franciscan orders reached the province of Fujian, where they began to spread their faith. Unlike the Jesuits, who directed their activities at both the elite and non-elite levels, Dominicans and Franciscans mainly worked among commoners and the lower strata of the gentry (government students and lower degree holders).

In the late Ming period, the spread of Christianity in China had mainly followed a two-step sequence. The Jesuits would initially attach themselves to literati in official positions who moved from one administrative post to the next. In the process they would visit a number of localities, and they would finally find a place suitable for the establishment of a residence, usually a locale that was under the protection or influence of one of their patrons and that was strategically positioned both in the administrative hierarchy and in the transportation network. They would purchase a residence for a Jesuit priest in a major administrative center. This then would become the center of a web of missionary stations (in general consisting of a small chapel and a dwelling), which the priest would visit periodically (Standaert 2001: 534–575). Thus, Jesuit Christianity was built on a network of friendly scholar-officials and on a web of local communities in which the vast majority of converts resided—men and women of all ages and of highly varied social composition, including artisans, schoolmasters, farmers, and so on. The Jesuits would visit rural villages, but they remained based in urban centers, usually situated at the administrative core of a certain region. This distribution of Jesuit missionary residences established in the late Ming period, though it was affected by the turmoil of the dynastic change, remained largely unaltered into the Qing period. However, in Fujian, the regional focus of this study, the network of communities set up by the "apostle" of the province, Giulio Aleni SJ (1582–1649), was dramatically curtailed by the Ming-Qing fighting and the policy of coastal evacuation.²¹ When a missionary was lacking, local communities would try to sustain their faith through simple devotional practices, and conversion of whole families assured that the faith became part of the heritage of a family or a locality.²²

The friars' mode of evangelization differed somewhat from that of the Jesuits. Because of their small number and the effective Jesuit monopoly of the China missionary field, the friars, mainly of Spanish origin and based in the Philippines, had to content themselves with areas

outside of Jesuit control. Since they initially could not enter China from Macao, an entrepôt of the Portuguese, who only allowed the transit of trusted Jesuits, the Dominicans and Franciscans decided to enter the Chinese empire from the maritime province of Fujian. To reach the Fujianese coast, the friars could count both on the support of the Spanish colonial government (which occupied northern Taiwan from 1626 to 1642) and on the network of contacts they had developed in Manila among the local immigrant community of southern Fujianese.²³

While the Franciscans maintained only a sporadic presence in Fujian, deciding at the beginning of the Qing to concentrate their efforts on Shandong, the Dominicans selected a cluster of rural villages in Fuan County in northeastern Fujian—a region known as Mindong (see Map 2)—as their main missionary territory.²⁴ This region uninterruptedly remained under their ministration from the early 1630s until the early 1950s. Today, Catholics in Fuan township are still a sizable group, constituting at least 8 to 9 percent of the population according to 1990 official statistics.²⁵ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, apparently, the percentage was even higher: alarmed officials in the early Qianlong reign, when Christianity had been prohibited for over twenty years, claimed that 20 to 30 percent of the local population was still actively practicing the Religion of the Lord of Heaven. Over 3,000 families—totaling probably at least 10,000 people—were identified as Christian by authorities in the wake of a 1746 anti-Christian campaign.²⁶

No doubt the most flourishing period for the community of Fuan before the nineteenth century was the Kangxi reign, when imperial toleration allowed for unprecedented growth.²⁷ A string of Dominican missionary posts extended from Guangzhou (Guangdong) to Jinhua (Zhejiang). The main residences were in Fuan, Ningde, Luoyuan, Funing (all in Mindong), and Zhangzhou (in southern Fujian), while outposts were established in Lanxi (Jinhua Prefecture, Zhejiang) and Guangzhou. The distances between the farthest posts in Fujian-Zhejiang were considerable: thirteen days of travel between Zhangzhou and Fuan, another twelve between Fuan and Lanxi.²⁸ The Dominicans would occasionally travel long distances to far-flung outposts, but they mostly resided in a central place, visiting the neighboring rural hamlets frequently. This was particularly true of the Fuan region, always the most densely evangelized. There, villages could be easily

reached in one day or less. A surviving 1719–1721 baptismal record-book owned by a single missionary shows that over the span of one month at least two or three villages were visited by the priest, who would administer baptisms, mostly of children from Christian families. He would probably reside for longer periods in localities where a residence-cum-church was available, while he would only visit briefly localities that merely had an "oratory" (Sierra 1719–1739: *passim*). The county seat of Fuan and the important nearby fortified village of Muyang had the largest numbers of Christians.

Sociologically, most of these converts belonged to the lower echelons of society, although some of them were literate. The story of the Jesuit dialog with late-Ming literati and the toils of Catholic priests who had become clockmakers and painters at the Qing court are well-studied subjects. However, no matter how important and influential the contact of the Jesuits with the elites had been, the vast majority of Catholic converts in China (who probably never exceeded 200,000) were not *jinshi* or Manchu noblemen but simple villagers and local students in the smaller towns and in the countryside of the Chinese provinces. From the Wanli reign in the Ming until the Yongzheng reign in the Qing, these local Christians benefited from the influential contacts of missionaries in high government circles. However, they led lives that were far removed from the glitter of the philosophical debates among Ming literati or the courtly rituals of Beijing.

This was indeed the case for Mindong Christians. The region, unlike the culturally and economically advanced areas of Fuzhou and Minnan, had seen its heyday before the Yuan period. From the Tang to the Song, the major commercial venue for the agricultural products of the region and the home base of the lineages producing higher degree holders had been the Mushui valley (*Fujian Liancun* 1997: 3). Liancun, together with the other villages of Muyang in the upper reaches of the valley and Suyang on Baima harbor, formed a commercial axis that controlled the flow of people and merchandise between the coast and the interior. From the eleventh through the thirteenth century, out of the seventy-six *jinshi* holders from Fuan, fifty-six were members of the important lineages of the Mushui valley, such as the Xues and Chens of Liancun, the Lius of Suyang, and, in lesser numbers, the Miaos of Muyang, among whom many eventually became—and still are—Christian (Miao 1996?: 1; Liu and Zhuang 1996: 7–8). Fuan became the main commercial and political center of Mindong

only in the Ming-Qing period. Overall, the region underwent a gradual decline in importance from the Song period on, and it was a backwater by late-imperial times.

A measure of this marginality is the fact that during the period from the Wanli through the Chongzhen reign (1573–1644), only five *jinshi* and seventeen *juren* came from the whole subprefecture of Funing, the lowest rate of success in all of Fujian. And this trend worsened during the Qing period.²⁹ This cultural marginality was reflected in the social standing of Dominican converts during the Chongzhen reign: while some were lower degree holders (mainly *gongsheng* and *shengyuan*), only one, Miao Shixiang, would eventually earn a *juren* degree. In the first decade of Dominican presence, a number of local government students (*shengyuan*) converted. Some, in fact, had been baptized by the Jesuits in Fuzhou while trying to pass the provincial examinations. In a local government document of 1637, we find a list of sixteen Fuan lower degree holders and a few male commoners, some clearly close relatives bearing the same surname, bringing the total to twenty-nine male Christians in positions of some leadership in the community (Xu Changzhi 1855: 2.30a–34b). Domingo Navarrete mentions in his *Controversias* that by 1649, during a period in which Christianity enjoyed the favor of the local Ming-loyalist military commander Liu Zhongzao, 5,400 people had been baptized and that between 1632 and 1671 there had been among them four *mandarines militares*, three *gongsheng*, one *juren* (probably a reference to Miao Shixiang), seventy *shengyuan* (thirty-four were still alive in 1671), and twelve *beatas* (blessed virgins) from prominent families.³⁰

The region was deeply affected by the Qing conquest: between 1647 and the early 1650s, Fuan and the surrounding subprefecture of Funing, like many other coastal prefectures of Fujian, were repeatedly attacked by the troops of different Ming-loyalist regimes and by Qing forces, becoming the temporary stronghold of one side or the other.³¹ Even later, with the continuation of military confrontation between the Qing and Zheng regimes and the outbreak of war between the Qing court and the feudatory Geng Jingzhong, Mindong continued to suffer from the dynastic upheaval: the coastal evacuation entailed enormous dislocations, and bandits or unruly troops continued to pillage the region, as is testified in Chinese and missionary sources.³² In spite of this, Christianity flourished. The number of *beatas* continued to increase: 24 in 1695, 50 in 1714, between 130 and 200 in the 1740s through 1760s.³³ Also, the overall number of converts grew continuously. However,

the percentage of Christian degree holders seems to have decreased during the Qing, since missionary documents stop boasting about the number of such converts. We know that two brothers from a prominent lineage of Muyang, Wang Daoxing and Wang Daosheng, who both earned *engongsheng* degrees in the 1690s (*Fuan xianzhi* 1884: 20.6b), were probably active leaders in their religious community, since they provided prefaces to some devotional works of the missionaries that were published in Fuan in the Kangxi period. At the beginning of the Yongzheng reign, in 1724, a government report denounced the presence of over ten *jiansheng* and *shengyuan* among the hundreds of converts in Fuan, while missionary sources give details on a number of Christian literati involved.³⁴ However, the Qianlong-period male leaders arrested by the imperial authorities were mostly *shengyuan* and more often just commoners. Clearly, the illegal status of Christianity would bar degree holders with any ambition for an official career from openly associating with the missionaries.³⁵

Times of the Lord of Heaven: Calendars of Devotion

Since the vast majority of Fuan Christians were lower degree holders and commoners, among them a large number of women, it is not too surprising that they had little penchant for reading doctrinal-philosophical arguments or scientific tracts, unlike the late-Ming Jesuit converts and sympathizers in the Jiangnan area, in the capital, or in the learned circles of Fuzhou. This is confirmed by the surviving Christian literature from Fuan. Eleven Chinese books confiscated in 1746 by Qing authorities from the minuscule library of the church of Fuan reflect the range of religious interests of local Christians.³⁶ Those books were all published during the late Ming and the Kangxi period. Written by missionaries of various religious orders with the help of their converts, they fall into the categories of catechisms in differing degrees of sophistication (three titles), Marian devotions (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). This subdivision of topics indicates that the two priorities for Dominican missionaries were the elementary teachings of the faith and the dissemination of devotional practices linked to the liturgy of sacraments and to the saints' calendar. Local Christians' religious interests lay in daily practices pertaining to spiritual salvation and physical healing: prayers for one's spiritual well-being and the souls of the departed; use of holy water and blessed images and objects

to safeguard the spirit and body; confession of sins; rituals for the sick, dying, and dead; and so on. For many rural people, the most crucial and thorny problems of life were illness, death, and personal salvation after death, so it is only natural that some of them were attracted by the rituals and devotions of the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven.³⁷ As Erik Zürcher observes in regard to the Jesuit Christian communities of Fujian in the late Ming, “Christianity was not just an intellectual construct, but a living minority religion, a complex of beliefs, rituals, prayer, magic, icons, private piety, and communal celebration. In that whole sphere of religious practice Christianity was by no means a semi-Confucian hybrid [as it was in the realm of doctrine]; in fact it came much closer to devotional Buddhism than to Confucianism” (1997: 650).

Among the novelties brought to China by Western missionaries were liturgical calendars, which, as we have seen, were pivotal in ordering ritual life. Such calendars introduced to new converts the organization of “Christian time.” This new structure of time, organized in the unit of seven days familiar to us in the West, was previously unknown in late-imperial China. The most important day in Christian calendars was the “Day of the Lord” (*zhuri*), and the remaining days were numbered from two through seven, revolving around that most important day.³⁸ Daily devotions—such as the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary—were to be practiced according to a specific weekly schedule, which was calculated around feastdays, that is, Sundays. Moreover, attendance at mass on the Day of the Lord was in principle a religious obligation for all believers, and according to church rules nobody should work on that day or on other religious holidays. Thus, for any Christian, calculating the occurrence of Sundays was of paramount importance in ordering religious life.

Another important aim of the liturgical calendar was to mark the celebration of the church saints. In China, new Christians would often take the name of the saint celebrated on the day of their baptism. As a consequence, the new convert gained a powerful protector in Heaven, to whom he or she could direct prayers for special favors, especially on the day when his or her patron saint was remembered in the calendar (see Couplet n.d.: 1a).

The missionaries did not attempt to introduce the Western calendar in China and substitute it for the current lunar calendar. Although such an unrealistic proposal was aired, it was rejected at a missionary conference in 1668 (see Metzler 1980: 27). Instead, following the ex-

ample of the pioneer of the mission, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, missionaries produced adaptations, or concordances, between the Gregorian and the Chinese lunar calendar. In a 1605 letter, Ricci referred to a manuscript translation of the Gregorian calendar he had done:

I have translated into Chinese the Gregorian calendar, adapted to their [lunar] year, so that Christians can see by themselves all the movable and fixed feasts of the year. Moreover, [they can] also [check] their moons and periods of the year, which are twenty-four, and do so more precisely than by using their own calendar, which they issue every year at much expense. Even the non-Christians are surprised [at our calendar’s accuracy], as I have given good explanations [of the method in it]. Some wanted to print it; but I did not let them do so, since to issue new calendars is a suspect thing in China.³⁹

Since 1589 all Ricci had done was to circulate simple one-sheet liturgical calendars for internal use by converts.⁴⁰ Only in 1625 did Nicolas Trigault in Xi’an dare to print a full calendar with instructions, apparently offering a trilingual edition in Chinese, Latin, and Syriac.⁴¹ But fear of incurring the displeasure of officials and literati for producing an unofficial calendar must have continued to limit publication of such works. The oldest specimen related to the liturgical calendar that I have found (which probably derived from Trigault’s prototype) is indeed a late-Ming printed *Tuiding linian zhanliri fa* (Method to calculate the [Christian] calendrical feastdays) of 1636.⁴² In the preface, the authors observe that “since the Days of the Lord fall on the days of the constellations *fang, xu, mao, and xing* [i.e., every seventh day] according to the basic calendar of the Great Ming, there is no need to describe the Western calendar.”⁴³ The *Method* continued by explaining the difference between the Western solar calendar and the Chinese lunar calendar, and by suggesting ways to calculate Christian feastdays based on the lunar cycle (Standaert and Dudink 2002: V, 303–306). Thus, for Chinese Christians the cycle of the lunar year remained the underlying reference structure to measure time, and it was to this that the new liturgical rhythm was grafted.

While Sundays could be easily marked because of their astronomical regularity, other recurrences had to be calculated in relation to the important astronomical dates of the Chinese lunar year. For example, Christmas (*Yesu shengdan*, December 25) was usually marked as “four

days after the winter solstice [*dongzhi*, December 21]," and Epiphany (January 6) was then calculated by counting twelve days after Christmas. As explained in Christian calendrical tables, some feasts (like Easter) were "movable" according to the cycle of the moon: "Movable feasts must be calculated first by looking at the spring equinox (*chunfen*). In determining the date of Easter, [for example], if the equinox is in the first half of the month, then Easter will fall on the Sunday after the full moon (*wang ri*) [of that month]. If the equinox is in the second half of the month, then [Easter] falls on the Day of the Lord after the full moon of the following month" (Couplet n.d.).⁴⁴ Perpetual calendrical tables (*yong zhanli dan/biao*) thus allowed one to calculate feastdays for any given year. While perpetual calendars in the West were mainly used by the clergy for the recitation of the Divine Office (Bonniwell 1945: 296–297), it appears that in the China mission—including the Dominican communities that followed the usages introduced by the Jesuits—they were also employed by converts.

Following in the steps of the Jesuits, the Dominicans also produced their own liturgical calendars. An eighteenth-century perpetual calendar printed in Fuan, titled *Shengjiao zhanli zhaiqi lüeyan*, states that it was "especially created for people receiving baptism, so they could choose the name of a saint for themselves, remember easily the day on which their soul had been born in the church of God, and thank the Lord of Heaven for the grace of baptism. Moreover, there is no lack of people who, out of devotion, invoke and take saints as their patrons to obtain some grace, and such people will be able to exercise their piety as they wish [using this calendar]."⁴⁵ Fuan Christians often bore names linked to the martyrology of the Dominican order or to the devotion of the Virgin Mary.⁴⁶

It is likely that different segments of the community had varying degrees of familiarity with such liturgical calendars. Perpetual calendars could be rather complex and required a certain level of literacy and education for proper use. Thus, in Fuan they probably circulated especially among the leadership or the most devout members of the Christian community: Chinese and Western priests, catechists and *jingtou* (prayer leaders), members of the Dominican Third Order (*San hui*), and *beatas*. Such individuals needed to calculate with precision the dates of religious festivals in order to lead rituals and prayer sessions when a priest was lacking, to recite the appropriate prayers, and to follow the correct fasting schedule. Also, some of them, that is, priests and—when none was available—catechists, had to administer

baptism, and they had to be able to choose the right baptismal name recurring on a certain day. However, converts less involved in the devotional life of the community would probably own the simpler calendrical tables (*zhanli zhaiqi biao*)—usually consisting of one leaf—that were printed every year and specified only the main feastdays and the prescribed fasting and abstinence days (see Figure 1). Christians were not the only religious group in China using such calendars: for example, Chinese Muslims had a similar tradition of printing a calendar specifying the customary abstinences mandated by the Qur'an (see Farjanel and Bouvat 1908).

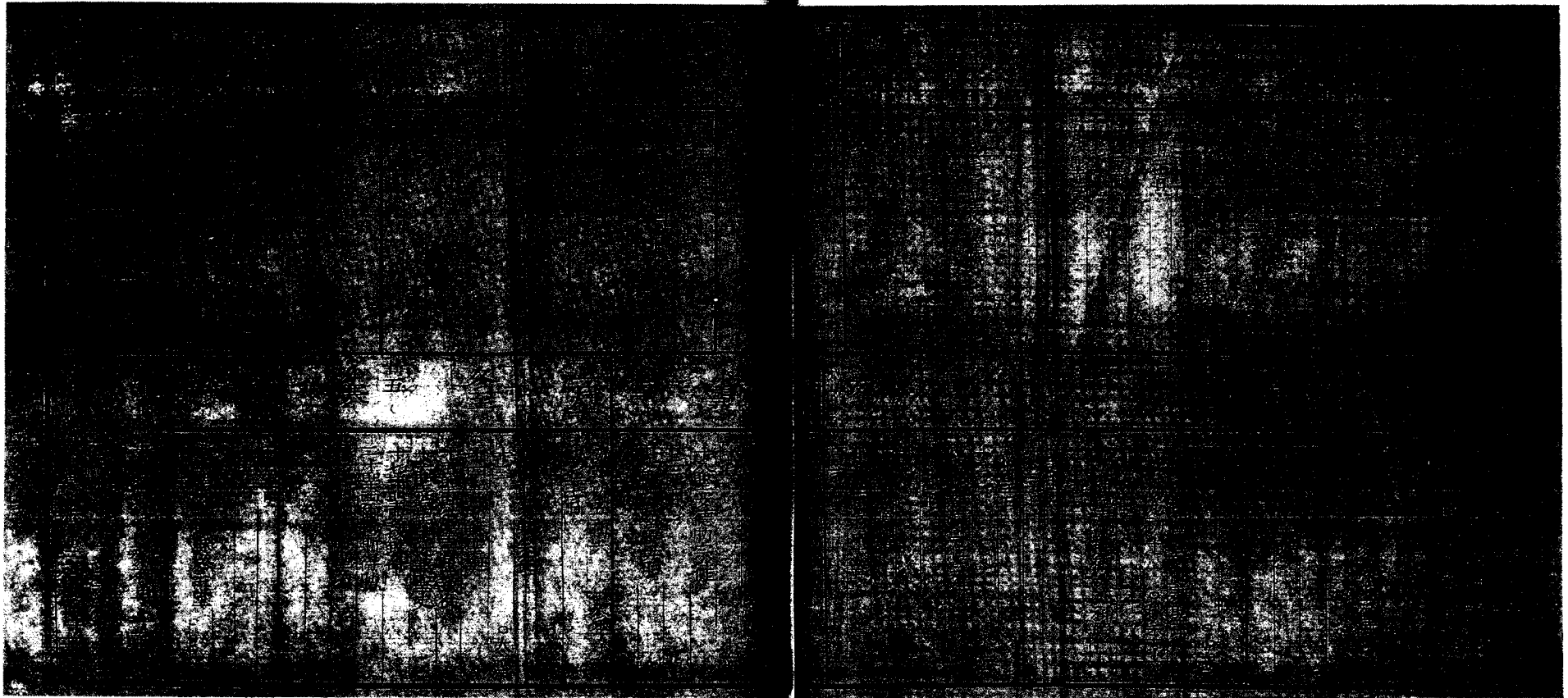
Thus a new set of Christian recurrences was superimposed on the regular time frame by means of some simple calculations, and this new cycle helped Christians to structure their religious lives. The more pious would have an intense devotional and ritual routine, but even semiliterate converts, less involved in active worship, would know when major Christian feasts had to be celebrated.

Christian Time and Chinese Time: Elements of Change and Incompatibility

As I observed in the introductory part of this essay, Christian time principally affected two important aspects of Chinese time: the selection of auspicious and inauspicious days, and the ritual cycle in honor of gods and ancestral spirits.

Almanacs were widely employed as hemerological tools as well as to determine the days on which rituals to ancestors or gods and spirits should be celebrated.⁴⁷ Fujian, one of the major printing centers of unofficial almanacs and calendars, was the home of innumerable cults, and ancestral rituals were celebrated there with great pomp and pride. Thus, a myriad of religious experts and ritual masters of ceremonies in the family cults were interested in charting time, and almanacs enjoyed the widest sales among the reading items of popular consumption (Huang 1996; Smith 1991: 77–82; Rawski 1979: 142).

Although popular almanacs and calendars could still be used by Christian converts to locate the calendrical correspondences between the lunar cycle and their liturgical calendar, the "superstitious" side of such instruments had to be ignored.⁴⁸ The practice of selecting auspicious days and times to offer sacrifices was forbidden. In the *Shengjiao mingzheng*, a catechism written by the Dominican Francisco Varo in Fujian between the early 1660s and 1677, for example, much effort is



Tianzhu shengjiao zhanli zhaiqi biao (A timetable of the feastdays and fasts of the Holy Teachings of the Lord of Heaven), 1746, preserved in AMEP, Chine, vol. 434: 1069r. Courtesy of Archives des Missions Étrangères, Paris.

spent in refuting the belief in auspicious and inauspicious days: "The numerologists say ... that the auspiciousness of a certain day and hour depends on the influence of a certain star, so that such a day is auspicious, and such an hour is good. Likewise, to avoid what is inauspicious and a diminution of fortune, one has also [to look at the stars' influence]. [However] ... the sun, the stars, and the moon have all been created by the Lord Creator to benefit humankind. ... Thus fortune and misfortune are all decided by the power of the Great Lord."⁴⁹

Varo also observes that atmospheric phenomena depend on changes in temperature according to the astronomical seasons and not on astral influences. As to the selection of days for weddings and

other ceremonies, he adds that the numerous Chinese who converted "do not select the days, and their joy or grief comes from the Supreme Lord" (Varo 1720: 63a). He nevertheless comments that the Holy Teachings do not forbid peasants from following the rhythms of the seasons, since to take advantage of the weather is the duty of their profession. Thus, the traditional festivals marking the agricultural year could still be retained as time markers but purged of their "superstitious" contents.

Similarly, three decades later (in 1706) Varo's confrère Francisco González de San Pedro criticized the selection of auspicious days in his catechism *Shengjiao cuoyao*, on the grounds that "human will is

highly superior to the stars." In a preface to that catechism, Wang Daoxing, the converted, lower-degree-holding literatus from the village of Muyang near Fuan, mentioned earlier, endorsed the position of González by joining him in an attack on the "heterodox theories" (*xie-shuo*) of Chinese divination.⁵⁰

However, the most important consequence of conversion, entailing acceptance of the Christian liturgical cycle, was the change provoked in the temporal cycle of communal festivals and domestic ceremonies. Christians were strictly forbidden to worship local gods or Buddhist and Daoist deities, or to use the services of shamans, healers, fortune-tellers, or other religious experts. In fact, one of the first acts required of converts was to surrender to the missionary all the statues and images of gods in the house, as well as any scriptures, so that such items could be destroyed.⁵¹ Although common to most missionary orders in China by the seventeenth century, this iconoclastic practice had first been implemented by Dominicans and Franciscans in the New World in vast campaigns to eradicate "idolatry" among the natives.⁵² In the Dominican communities of the Fuan region, moreover, the removal of ancestral tablets was required, although enforcement was not always possible, and missionary positions changed over time. Clearly, the calendar of communal and domestic celebrations in honor of the gods would lose significance for those Christians who truly forsook previous beliefs.

Communal Rituals

A case reported by Varo shows the significant consequences of conversion for the celebration of traditional communal ritual events. In 1678 a conflict over participation by a Christian in a local temple cult developed in Luoyuan (Fuzhou Prefecture), a coastal town on the road between the provincial capital and Fuan, where the Dominicans had a church connected to their missionary center up north in Mindong. Varo reports the case as follows:

In that town there is one idol among others to which the gentiles are extremely devout, and every year they celebrate a procession and a festival [in its honor], spending a large amount of money. Every year, eighteen [ritual] masters (*maiordomos*) are selected, in order to make sure that the festival is celebrated with [due] solemnity. It so happened that in that year, the father of a Christian was selected to be one of the masters. [However, that man] died before the festival,

and thus the gentiles wanted to oblige his son Jacobe to fulfill the obligation of his father. He said that he was Christian and that he could not occupy such a position.⁵³

The reference here is apparently to the celebrations held in honor of the local "god of the earth" (*tushen*) in Luoyuan during the third moon (mid-April), around the time of the Qingming festival. On that occasion, a local cultic association (*she*) would bring the image of the god out of the temple and would conduct a procession in the god's territory. The Daoguang edition of the Luoyuan gazetteer records that "in previous times, each family would contribute to the expenses, and they would dress in ceremonial robes, have music played, and bring the god around in a procession. . . . Among all the god's festivals (*hui*), the most lavish, the one that thus was called 'the great procession' (*daying*), used to be that of the Vanguard Temple" (*Luoyuan xianzhi* 1831: 27.5a). For the festival of that temple—continues the gazetteer—the local people would be divided into eighteen groups (*dui*), called "the eighteen tents," since each group set up a colorful temporary structure (*caipeng*) with musicians and banners. It thus appears that this festival is the one described by Varo. The gazetteer adds that the expenses borne by the "gathering heads"—Varo's *maiordomos* (in Chinese *huishou*, presumably one for each *dui*)—were very high, especially on the occasions of the communal banquets (*chahui*) and the feast for the appeasement of the god (*anshen*). The text also adds that "no matter whether someone among those on the roster of names [selected on a rotating basis to support the festival] is dead or alive, or whether he has transferred his residence elsewhere, his son and nephews cannot back out from it" (*ibid.*) This statement indicates that attempts to avoid the responsibilities involved in the festival were not uncommon, and our 1678 incident falls squarely among those attempts. However, evidence from research on temple cults also indicates that it was very difficult to avoid one's duties.⁵⁴ In spite of this, the Christian Jacobe probably felt that his justification to avoid what others in Luoyuan perceived as his ritual duty was strong and did not warrant any counterclaim from non-Christians. By his conversion to Christianity, he had pledged allegiance to a different set of spiritual entities—the Lord of Heaven, the Holy Mother, the saints—and *their* ritual cycle.

The development of this case seems to confirm that Christians—whose loyalty rested with their new god, the Lord of Heaven—did not

feel obliged to respect the local ritual cycle honoring other gods. The gathering heads, in an attempt to force Jacobe to contribute to the festival, left the statue of the earth god in the entrance hall of his house, perhaps in the hope that the god would scare him into compliance or punish him. At night, however, the mother and the mother-in-law of Jacobe, both Christians, went out and emptied a bucket of garbage on the statue. All this happened without the intervention or advice of any missionary, since none was residing in Luoyuan at the time, as Varo himself points out. The outcry that followed this sacrilegious act can easily be imagined.

The [ritual] masters, . . . filled with fury and anger for the irreverence shown to their idol, immediately went to the main military mandarin of that town, who was very devout toward the idols, in order to get his consent to demolish the Church of the Lord. After he learned what the Christians had done to the most venerated idol of that place, his answer was not what they expected, but what the Lord wished, since *Cor regis in manu Domini* [the heart of the king is in the hands of God (Prov. 21:1)]. He thus told them: "If you knew that the Christians do not venerate our idols but that on the contrary they disapprove of them and defame them, you did something truly bad in bringing [the idol] to their house. I do not judge or care for things of little importance. Go back to your homes!" The gentiles were left very displeased by such an answer. They thus also appealed to the mandarin governor [i.e., the county magistrate] of the town, but he gave the same answer. Finally, furious and ashamed, they recovered their idol, cleaned it, and held their festival. (Varo 1678: 361v)

The officials criticized the ritual masters for their decision to abandon the god in the hands of people who did not recognize its supremacy ("you did something truly bad in bringing [the idol] to their house"). This seems to indicate that local headmen and officials did not subscribe to the same conception of ritual community and cycle. It is well known that officials were often critical of the organizations behind the celebration of religious festivals, since such events sometimes offered opportunities for local riffraff to earn money and bully others. In this case, however, the source underlines that the official was "very devout toward the idols."

For townspeople it was inconceivable to escape the obligations en-

tailed by the festival, since everybody in Luoyuan was territorially subject to the god, and prominent individuals were socially bound to fulfill their ritual role. The exogenous officials, instead, even if devout, could conceive of a parallel and distinct ritual world. They indeed recognized the separateness and difference of the Christians: "Christians do not venerate our idols but . . . on the contrary they disapprove of them and defame them."⁵⁵ Indeed, at the time Christianity was benignly tolerated by the Kangxi emperor, and officials knew this well. Thus, the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven had a legal right to exist side by side with other orthodox popular cults, and converts could actually choose legitimately to withdraw from the local religious cycle, without fear of official reproach. Of course, this explanation should not obscure the fact that social pressure on converts from fellow villagers to conform to local traditions remained strong.⁵⁶

Ancestor Reverence

Other cases of iconoclasm against local gods and Buddhist shrines are to be found in Dominican chronicles and reports from Fuan.⁵⁷ While most episodes were against "idols," a few were directed against the symbols of ancestor reverence. This was a direct consequence of the Dominicans' position on the practice, which they considered to be a complex of rituals belonging to a false and idolatric religion. Unlike the Jesuits, who well into the eighteenth century permitted offerings to the ancestors on domestic altars as long as the tablets did not bear characters indicating the seat of the soul (*shen* or *ling*), Dominicans forbade any kind of tablet or offering.⁵⁸ Studies by Ebrey (1991) and Chow (1994) have contributed to our understanding of elite debates on family rituals in the Ming-Qing period. However, it appears that the issues discussed by Confucian ritualists were not those that concerned contemporary Catholic missionaries and their converts. Rather, the latter debates centered on the compatibility of ancestral rituals with the worship of the Lord of Heaven and on whether their essence was religious or "civil."⁵⁹

In any case, it is clear that for those believers who accepted the Dominican prohibitions, the domestic rituals for the ancestors as enshrined in the traditional liturgical cycle should be discontinued. In practice, though, the situation was more complex: while most converts were compliant and sometimes even took the initiative in destroying idols, attacks on family rituals were hardly tolerated by officials or local gentry and were resisted by some of the converts.

In the earliest anti-Christian incident in Fuan, in 1637, five years after the arrival of the first Dominican, the contentious issue of ancestral rituals and respect for the calendar had clearly emerged and crystallized around the traditional obligation to make offerings at domestic shrines and graves. Following complaints from local gentry and in the wake of a provincewide campaign to eradicate heterodox groups, local officials arrested some of the Western missionaries and their converts (on this episode, see Menegon 1997). On that occasion, the Fujian maritime circuit intendant (*xunhai dao*) wrote: "I have carefully read their books. Their main idea is that by following the Lord of Heaven they will attain knowledge of the Way, and that paradise and hell are the places where we all will finally go. [To them], the human world is totally despicable; only the Lord of Heaven is worthy of utmost respect. At the deaths of their parents, they do not express any feeling of grief by crying; after their parents' burials, they do not respect the festivals in which the prescribed sacrifices must be performed" (Xu Changzhi 1855: 2.33a).

By eliminating from the ritual calendar the prescribed family sacrifices to the ancestors, Christian beliefs undermined the foundations on which the state established its control of local society. The concerns of the intendant were further revealed later in his report, where he berated some arrested Christian *shengyuan* for proclaiming themselves "followers of Confucius' teachings" (*Zhongni jiao ren*):

Followers of Confucius' teachings should "be circumspect in funerary services and continue sacrifices to the distant ancestors."⁶⁰ ... [Confucius says]: "When [your parents] are living, serve them according to the observances of ritual propriety; when they are dead, bury them and sacrifice to them according to the observances of ritual propriety."⁶¹ How can you be called disciples of Confucius if at [your parents'] deaths you do not grieve, and at their burials you do not offer libations?! You [Christians] deeply dislike the Chinese [ritual for] the burial of parents and consider it wrong to conduct sacrifices [to the departed], since [you believe that] those who are followers of the Lord of Heaven will live again in paradise. Therefore, [for you] the sacrifices performed in spring and autumn all belong to the category of false rites (*shu feili*). Alas, this is to borrow the barbarian teachings to bring disorder to the sagely Way! (Xu Changzhi 1855: 2.32b)

What the intendant had read and heard about Christianity, as well as his personal experience in confronting a group of rather daring literati converts from Fuan, convinced him that their discontinuance of the spring and autumn sacrifices was just a first bold step toward a complete undermining of the Confucian Way. The spurious claim by the converts that they were intent on recovering the true meaning of Confucius' teachings—as a matter of fact, a Jesuit idea—sounded preposterous to the official.⁶²

Thus, the Dominican policy represented a radical challenge to the ritual fabric of local society, and it is no wonder that it elicited strong reactions. In fact, some converts at times circumvented the prohibitions against ancestor reverence, as testified by the Franciscan Augustin de San Pascual (1637–1697). San Pascual, who ministered in the Mindong mission during the period from 1672 to 1677, reported that "in Loyuen-hien [Luoyuan County], the administration of the said [Dominican] fathers, the Christians have [ancestral tablets] in their houses, adorned with flowers and *pepetes* [i.e., incense holders]. So this was what I saw once when administering there. And in Liuyang [near Muyang] I burnt some fourteen [ancestral tablets]. They belonged to an old Christian of the Dominican fathers."⁶³

In spite of such cases, however, the words of the Fujian coastal intendants and of the converted *shengyuan* showed that ancestor reverence and funerary rituals—and, as a consequence, the ritual cycle of each month—were considerably affected by Dominican policy. Many Fuan Christians did reject ancestral rituals, together with the cult of gods, and had to endure the hostility of non-Christians, who, according to Fr. Varo, in 1678 still incorrectly believed that "Christians bury their dead like dogs, without any ceremony" (Varo 1678: 352v). That neophytes were well aware of the consequences of their conversion for ancestor reverence and other "superstitions" is evident in a 1671 memorial by Varo: "We [missionaries] touch upon these points [of the superstitions] 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 renounce baptism for this reason."⁶⁴

Nevertheless, even the Dominicans had to make some concessions, as Varo admitted when he said that certain ceremonies were allowed.

We know, for example, that at least up to the middle 1680s Christians in the Fuan region were permitted to kowtow in front of the painted images of their deceased parents and ancestors during wedding ceremonies and on the occasion of the Chinese New Year festivities, although they could put only candles and incense sticks in front of the portraits, not any form of offering or ancestral tablet (see Varo 1685: 25r–v). This kind of practice indicates that Chinese Christians actively engaged the missionaries in negotiations over ritual and devotion.

Christian Time and Chinese Time: Negotiations

The difficulties experienced by Dominican missionaries in enforcing the prohibition of ancestor reverence in Fujian underline that the exacting standards of superstition-free purity set by Varo and his companions could not always be met. The introduction of Christian time, while it succeeded in eliminating some old customs—important ones at that—also obliged the missionaries to accept an array of negotiations, pressed on them by circumstances and by the appeals of their converts. Here I concentrate on two areas of negotiation linked to the liturgical calendar: first, the precept to celebrate the Days of the Lord and the other feastdays by abstaining from work and attending mass; and second, the practice of fasting and abstaining from meat on certain days.

The Day of the Lord and Feastdays

The feasibility of respecting feastdays depended on different factors, nicely summarized in 1656 by the Jesuit Martino Martini. The first hindrance to the enforcement of this precept was the difficulty many converts found in abstaining from work.⁶⁵ Martini observed: "In the kingdom of China the majority of the Christians are workers, who must obtain food for themselves and their wives by toiling every single day. If they were obliged to observe Sundays and feastdays, they could hardly obtain sustenance for their lives. They are also obliged by their officials (*praefecti*) to work, and they cannot excuse themselves by means of any agreement, since their non-Christian officials care little whether it is a feastday or not" (Vareschi 1994: 239). In fact, he observed, even officials, under danger of losing their office, must take care of the business of their yamen every day. Early in their mission Jesuits had noted that "among the Chinese there is no feast or resting day, since all days are dedicated to work."⁶⁶ Indeed, in Ming-Qing

China there was no regular rest day; festivals were mainly seasonal and, except for some of national import, were generally local in nature (Yang 1955: 307–309).

The Dominicans also remarked that regular attendance at communal religious ceremonies on a weekly basis was an uncommon phenomenon in the religious landscape of Fuan. Diego Aduarte, the first historian of the Dominican mission, reported that Chinese Christians recently converted in Fuan would meet their obligations and listen to Mass often, in sharp contrast with non-Christians, who "go to worship very rarely to their temples and [have] almost no obligation" (Aduarte 1640: II, 486; see also Bürkler 1942: 4). Missionaries elsewhere had noted the lack of weekly communal rites since the very beginning of their enterprise: in the 1601 "Annual Letter," the Jesuit Valentim Carvalho wrote that "it is very unusual for any of the sects of China to meet very frequently."⁶⁷

Another problem faced by Christians was the opposition that their Sunday assemblies and public celebration of feasts encountered, especially in the cities. As observed by Martini, Christian meetings were regarded with suspicion by authorities, since the laws against heterodox groups forbade any private gathering, especially wherein men and women would mix. Finally, the limited number and sparse geographic distribution of the missionaries and their churches and chapels precluded regular masses for most of the faithful. The Jesuits, in particular, resided in administrative centers and made trips to the surrounding countryside, reaching certain isolated communities only once every one or two years (see Vareschi 1994: 239). The Jesuits early on had proclaimed in their catechisms the third commandment on the respect of feastdays (e.g., Ruggieri, Ricci, and Vagnone) and had even mentioned the so-called precept of the church about the obligation to hear Mass on Sundays and compulsory feastdays and to abstain from work on those days (e.g., Da Rocha). Nevertheless, regular attendance at masses and abstention from work on Sundays and feastdays was not strictly enforced in their communities.⁶⁸ One Jesuit admitted that his order would be less exacting with new converts; they would try gradually to accustom them to confession and to attending Mass only at the major feasts (Ignacio Lobo SJ [1603–?], as quoted in Bürkler 1942: 10).

When the first Dominicans arrived in the Fuan region in the 1630s, they were surprised by the relatively casual attitude of Jesuit converts toward the feastday precept, and, together with the Franciscans, they launched accusations that the Jesuits neglected the enforcement of

the church precepts. They soon made public to Christians the various rules for fasting, abstinence, and attendance at Mass, based on the liturgical calendar, and proceeded to denounce the Jesuits' laxity in Manila, Macao, and Rome. Although limitations on the work of the Dominicans were similar to those encountered by the Jesuits, the friars—forced by jurisdictional circumstances—ended up concentrating their efforts in the relatively circumscribed area of Mindong and southern Zhejiang. Thus, they were in a position to monitor their communities with greater continuity—especially the larger ones, such as those in the towns of Fuan and Muyang, in each of which the numbers of converts reached almost 2,000 in the early eighteenth century.

We know little about the direct requests of Christians regarding specific negotiations in their lives. Nevertheless, from the prolonged discussions among missionaries about the precept regarding feastdays, we can see that accommodation to local conditions was necessary.⁶⁹

Fasting and Abstinence

The practices of fasting and abstinence from meat were strictly disciplined by the liturgical calendar. As described by Varo in his catechism, in fasting there was a distinction between “mental fasting” (*xinzhai*) and “oral fasting” (*kouzhai*). Oral fasting (also called “external fasting,” *waizhai*) was a way to mortify the flesh and subdue the passions, and it was further divided into two kinds: “small fasting” (*xiaozhai*) and “great fasting” (*dazhai*). Small fasting (i.e., abstention from meat) did not mean to lessen one's food intake but to avoid “the thick taste of animals”; it was still permissible to eat “the creatures of the water, fruits, and vegetables.” As for great fasting, it prescribed abstention from meat as well as reduction in the number of meals. Mental fasting was a fast of the will, undertaken to purge selfishness and overcome the “seven passions.” Without mental fasting, oral fasting was meaningless.

Varo added that the formal days of obligatory fasting had been reduced by the pope from sixty-three in the original European rules (*dazhai yuangui*) to a total of nine for China, mainly during Lent, and it was a grave sin not to respect them. If people fasted on the remaining days of fasting of the universal church, they would acquire special merit (*gong*). However, respecting the days of abstention from meat was required of all and was to be calculated using the “tables of feastdays” (*zhanli dan*).⁷⁰

The ideas of fasting and abstinence were not new to China, since

Daoists and Buddhists had been maintaining vegetarian diets for centuries.⁷¹ Exactly because fasting and abstinence were associated in the minds of most people with Buddhism, the first generation of Jesuit missionaries appears to have been very restrained in imposing strict fasting rules on neophytes. Matteo Ricci in fact provoked a Christian-Buddhist dispute with the monks Zhu Hong (1535–1615) and Yu Chunxi (?–1621) on the subject of fasting, over the different metaphysical bases for practicing it, and over the Christian rejection of the vegetarian diet, which derived from the Buddhist command to save life.⁷² One of the acts required at the moment of conversion was renunciation of “pagan” fasting practices, and the Canton missionary conference of 1668 (including Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans) discussed the necessity to forbid catechumens from following the dietary prohibitions of Buddhism, which excluded, for example, fish and eggs, all foods allowed to Christians (see Fan 1633, as quoted in Zürcher 1997: 636; as well as Metzler 1980: 24).

Despite such prescriptions, missionary discussions on fasting and abstinence reveal the difficulties and negotiations of practice. Since Chinese Christians were usually poor and ate mostly rice and vegetables, they did not need to be convinced to avoid meat. However, exactly because of the poverty of their diet, to oblige them to fast could be harmful to their health. Thus exceptions were listed in the catechisms and were authorized by special papal indulgence, following petitions from the missions.⁷³ Moreover, particular Chinese customs had to be taken into account. In the Dominican mission of Fujian, but also elsewhere in China and in the missions of Tonkin and Cochinchina, for example, customarily on the last day of the last month of the Chinese year and on the first two days of the new year, Christians were not obliged to respect fast and abstinence regulations. This lifting of the precept was due to the fact that the Spring Festival was the most important feast period of the year in China and was usually celebrated, even among the poor, with good meals and meat dishes.⁷⁴

Christian Time and Chinese Time: New Rhythms and Congruent Traditions

As we have seen, negotiations were unavoidable, and in fact necessary, when introducing new customs and practices. Converts positioned between two worlds and two times could not conduct their lives separate from their social context. Ritual and devotional novelties introduced

by the missionaries did not flourish in a vacuum, and the harsh condemnation of idolatry and magic by missionaries should not obscure the fact that existing Chinese traditions might have facilitated the acceptance of some of the new devotional practices. Thus, Christian religious practices, while introducing new rhythms and beliefs, were to a degree internalized through existing sensibilities.

Ascetic Practices

While the days of compulsory fasting and of abstinence from meat, clearly marked in liturgical calendars, were known to Christians at large, stricter ascetic practices were the preserve of a selected few. In Fuan, for example, a limited circle of converts chose to join the Third Order of Penance of San Dominic, known in Chinese as the San hui, where such practices were held in high regard.

The Dominican Third Order originated in the spiritual climate of the penitential movements of the European High Middle Ages. It obtained its first rule in 1285 as a form of lay affiliation to the Dominican [First] Order. Members of the Third Order desired to have some form of connection to monastic life while remaining in the world. They would thus try to emulate the prayer regime of monks; engage in various penitential practices (self-flagellation, wearing a hair shirt, and so on); adopt a strict schedule of fasting and abstinence; remain virginal if unmarried, chaste if widowed, or refrain from sexual contacts on fasting days if married. Charitable activities were also among their duties. Entry to the order was subject to the approval of a Dominican priest as well as of a Third Order lay prior or prioress, and it required taking special vows (including a vote of chastity for some). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the rise of a more private sense of spiritual life in Europe impelled among the members of the Third Order practices such as meditation, frequent communion and confession, spiritual retreats, and other devotional practices. Recitation of the rosary and fulfillment of the obligations necessary to obtain papal indulgences for oneself or the souls of the departed (attending masses or doing penance, for example) were among the most common of such devotions (Boaga 1973–1997).

The Dominicans immediately introduced in their Chinese missions the institution of the Third Order. One of the first Dominican converts in Fuan, the commoner Andres Huang (probably Huang Da-cheng; baptized 1633, died 1648), asked to join the Third Order soon after conversion. Contemporary documents report that "after admira-

bly 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 or the penances of religious life, even when he was ill, exercising himself daily in mental prayer" (Riccio 1667: 218v). His spiritual life was closely monitored by Fr. Juan García (1606–1665), and a relatively long hagiographic account of his Christian life written by Fr. Victorio Riccio (1621–1685) describes in some detail his charitable and catechetical activities. Huang was a married, literate man of some means. Even before conversion he enforced on his wife Teresa strict rules against anything "dishonest," keeping her female friends out of the house to prevent gossip and laziness. After conversion he convinced her to "be sexually continent, separating their nuptial bed, and observing perpetual chastity."⁷⁵

Another prominent Christian, the *gongsheng* Joaquin Guo Bang-yong, traveled to Manila in 1638 and remained in the Dominican convent of Bataan for two years, solemnly professing in the Third Order before returning to Fuan in 1641 (Riccio 1667: 234v–239v). Furthermore, a cursory look at the eulogies of the dead in the Fuan mission, as found in the *Acts* of the Dominican Chapters of Manila in the first half of the eighteenth century, reveals that a number of men from the Chen lineage of Fuan and the Miao lineage of Muyang were Dominican tertiaries. Some of them received high praise for their asceticism and lifelong chastity (*Acta* 1877).

But an even greater number of women tertiaries can be found in those lists of eulogies. Vows of chastity were especially popular among converted women, who chose to remain virgins and lead lives of prayer and self-mortification. Women who led this form of religious life, which was quite popular in Spain, were known as *beatas* (in Chinese *tongzhen*; see Christian 1981: 170). The most celebrated among these women was Petronilla Chen (b. ca. 1625), who, as a child, had been a devout Buddhist, fasting and following 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. Having soon memorized the catechism, she obtained baptism at age eleven, and at eighteen she took vows of chastity as a member of the Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic, continuing her ascetic practices until her death in the 1710s.⁷⁶ Petronilla was not alone: in 1695 there were at least twenty-four other *beatas* in the territory of Fuan, between eighteen and seventy-two years of age, and

they all followed the rules of the Third Order, practicing meditation, recitation of scriptures, and fasting in accord with the liturgical calendar. From a surviving Chinese-language manuscript of the Third Order rules, we learn that the aims of the Third Order were twofold: "to benefit one's soul, and to be a good example for others, so that they may better serve the Lord."⁷⁷ While in the late 1640s a group of *beatas* lived for a period in a convent in Dingtou, a coastal village not far from Fuan, sharing a communal routine of religious practices in a way similar to consecrated nuns, later on it appears that most of those women lived in special quarters assigned to them by their families in their own homes. Petronilla for a long time was the prioress in charge of monitoring her sisters in religion, and communal devotions were performed weekly in a local chapel built for the women.

In sum, the Dominican Third Order was closely connected by its vows to the First Order, and its members followed a very strict regime of penance, sexual abstinence, and prayer, disciplined by the liturgical cycle of the church. Such lay organizations were not, however, unique to Fuan: in the seventeenth century around four hundred Christian lay confraternities existed in various Jesuit communities all over China. Jesuit confraternities were different from the Dominican Third Order in that they did not entail vows and their rules were less strict. They were mostly dedicated to catechetical instruction, to assistance in the funerary rituals of departed members or poor coreligionists, and to communal devotions and charitable activities.⁷⁸ They usually met once a month and were divided into groups of youths, men, and women. They thus had a more universal appeal than the Third Order, which was an elite organization only for the most devout, aiming to set an example and to promote the spiritual growth of the members.

Many forms of organized piety existed in the Chinese religious traditions of lay Buddhist groups and charitable associations, and similarities in practices and aims of such associations with the Christian confraternities has already been noted in general terms. Besides engaging in fasts, penances, and charitable activities, many of these groups privileged the recitation of sutras. Given this preexisting tradition, it is of little surprise that recitational prayer found an enthusiastic following among Fuan Christians.⁷⁹

Daily Devotions: Recitation of the Rosary

A daily devotional practice that characterized both communal and private religious life in Fuan was the recitation of the rosary. A 1668

pocket-size prayer book from Fuan, containing instructions for reciting the rosary, describes for Chinese converts the beginning of this tradition more than four hundred years before in Tolouse, France: The Holy Mother (*shengmu*) in person had appeared to St. Dominic, founder of the Dominican Order, and had ordered him to teach people to pray over the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary (i.e., to recite the *Hail Mary* and other prayers following meditation on evangelical episodes). Now, that devotion had reached China, and since it was not a human but a divine institution, it could not be neglected by any Christian.⁸⁰ Indeed, this was one of the most enduring practices of the Dominican mission.

According to the standard practice, a total of 150 Hail Marys were divided into three cycles of fifty, to be recited daily. The five Joyful Mysteries (meditations on the life of Christ) were to be recited on "the first and fourth day after the day of the Lord"; the five Sorrowful Mysteries (on the Passion) were to be recited on "the second and fifth day"; the five Glorious Mysteries (on the Resurrection) were to be recited on the "third and sixth day"; finally, on the Day of the Lord the entire rosary was to be recited. Thus, the faithful were required to keep a watchful count of the number of prayers they were reciting, as well as of the days during which each set had to be recited. Certainly, this was the practice that most consistently set the cadence of Christian time in Fuan.

This devotion, especially popular among women, was practiced alone, in choirs in the church, or with one's family at night. An important mnemonic device used in the recitation was the 150-bead string called in Chinese the *zhuchuan*. This was one of the most popular devotional objects imported by missionaries for their converts: in a shipment sent from Macao to Fuan in 1678, besides statues, candles, and reliquaries, we find "a large quantity of rosaries" (Varo 1678: 362v).

The popularity of the rosary among converts probably contributed to the creation of a recitational pattern uniquely Chinese in flavor. A nineteenth-century Dominican described with some surprise the way Fuan Christians mixed Western and Chinese modes of recitation, a practice that he correctly believed to have originated in the seventeenth century. A leader (*jingtou*) would loudly call out, "[Let us] intone the prayers." Prayer was opened with a 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—which was a formula employed in Spain and Portugal, and in their

colonies, and used in China until the 1950s. Then everyone would kowtow and silently recite the self-deprecatory prayers (*Confiteor* and *Miseratur*). They would then remain on their knees and, following the lead of the *jingtou*, would chant the rosary "not in a low voice, but singing in the way a choir of monks chants in semitone, since their language is naturally musical."⁸¹ In fact, all the various Christian prayers were similarly chanted in communal worship.

Once again, congruent elements existed in Chinese religious tradition. The rosary as a physical object, for example, was not a novelty in China. First mentioned in scriptures and depicted in stone reliefs in the fourth century AD, the rosary (called *shuzhu*, counting beads; *xiangzhu*, fragrant beads; *nianzhu*, recitation beads; or *chizhu*, beads for keeping [recitations], all terms avoided by Varo but often used by Jesuit authors) was in fact an important devotional object in Buddhism, mainly used to count recitations of the name of Amitābha. Initially used by monks and nuns, it also became an object for use by the laity (see Kieschnick 2003: 124–138).

As for the recitational patterns of Christians, a congruent tradition in China was the recitation of sutras practiced by lay Buddhist groups. Brunner has tentatively suggested that Christian converts probably imitated the chanting of Buddhist monks, or that they used the melodies on which poems were chanted, or that they just replicated the way primers were chanted to learn characters (1963: 157). In Fuan it is not unlikely that they adopted the forms of recitation popular among lay Buddhist groups, such as those in the Nonaction movement, which began to spread in southern Zhejiang and northern Fujian in the 1630s.⁸²

Although it could be used for personal prayer, the recitation of the rosary as practiced in Fuan became the most communal of Christian devotional practices, since it required the daily gathering of the members of each family, and even of neighbors, at fixed times. Use of the rosary was truly a confluence of Western and Chinese practices, and it embodied the hybrid nature of Christian devotion in China: Christian time was no longer necessarily Western time.

Conclusion

Recently, Erik Zürcher has sketched the contours of what he calls the two "faces" of late-Ming and early-Qing Christianity. On one hand, the

Jesuits acted in China as "literati from the West" (*xiru*) and tried to accommodate Christianity to the Confucian world view, producing, together with their converts, a "monotheistic and puristic version of Confucianism, strongly opposed to Buddhism, Taoism, and popular 'superstition'" (1997: 649). On the other hand, those Jesuit missionaries were and remained priests, and their converts were indeed devotees of a religious cult. Zürcher concludes that "in an elite environment, Christianity had to combine two roles that were almost incompatible" (*ibid.*: 650).

In this essay I have endeavored to examine the religious and devotional face of Christianity in a community evangelized by friars. The Dominicans in Fuan worked mainly among commoners and at the lowest levels of the gentry class. They spread simple devotions and tried to respond to the needs of common people who had to cope with illness and death, and who were seriously concerned about their fate after death. In this the Dominicans did not differ from the Jesuits. In fact, the general neglect of the religious activities of Jesuits among the lower echelons of the literati and among commoners in China derives from a bias of modern scholarship, which until recently has privileged elite discourse. The *Litterae Annuae* and other manuscript documents from the Jesuit missions, which are filled with stories of miracles, possessions, exorcisms, piety among commoners, and conflicts with pagans, await closer inspection.⁸³

However, in spite of commonality in the work of these two religious orders among the lower classes, we cannot forget that the Dominicans were opposed to the Confucianized Christianity of the Jesuits. The Dominicans introduced new practices and a new sense of liturgical time, and their converts had to make religious choices far more radical than those of the majority of Jesuit converts. For instance, besides renouncing the old gods, they had to renounce ancestor reverence. This, as we have seen, altered the structure of the Chinese temporal cycle and entailed a radical choice that other religious minorities, like the Jews or the Muslims, never faced. The potentially disruptive effects of Christian time on the lives of converts and the backlash from surrounding society, one would think, should have doomed the Christian communities of the Fuan region to quick extinction. Such extinction should also have been accelerated in the early eighteenth century by the bitter doctrinal disputes between the two parties in the Chinese Rites Controversy—accommodationists versus

purists—which resulted in the Kangxi emperor exiling those missionaries who did not respect Ricci's position on ancestor reverence and the cult of Confucius.

However, in the end, neither social pressure at the local level nor the controversy at the imperial court succeeded in eradicating Christianity in Fuan. On the contrary, Christian communities in Fuan have survived up to this day. They have gone through more than one century of Qing religious prohibitions (1723–1844); they have been the focus of massive anti-Christian campaigns in 1724, 1729, 1733–1734, 1746–1747, 1754, 1769–1771, and 1836–1837; and since the establishment of the People's Republic they have undergone the fate of Catholics all over the country, enduring repeated waves of suppression. Today, the Fuan region is home to a strong underground church faithful to the Vatican as well as an officially recognized "open church," and imposing old and new church buildings dot the countryside, catering to the large number of local Catholics. Most of them belong to the same lineages that converted over three hundred years ago.

A number of religious devotees remained Christians in spite of the resistance encountered in their locales, and they continued to uphold a complex of religious obligations that in Fujian were considered "demanding" (*yan*).⁸⁴ Indeed, Fuan converts did away with some Chinese domestic and communal rituals (such as ancestor reverence), but their choices were not of a doctrinal nature. The Dominicans—unlike the Jesuits, who welcomed some theological reflection among their converts—saw doctrine as the exclusive preserve of the church. The friars' Christians must have been given to know that infringing upon the prohibitions of the church would cause spiritual damage, endanger their souls, and deprive them of the consoling sacraments, especially confession (which indeed were denied by Dominicans to recalcitrants after 1693).⁸⁵ Thus, certain "superstitious and diabolical" practices had to be abandoned, since converts—unlike many modern people—deeply cared for their salvation in the afterlife.

The break, however, was not as dramatic as it appears. For instance, the fear of hell and the desire for salvation after death were sentiments already widely shared among Chinese people in late imperial times in the contexts of Buddhist and other popular religious beliefs. Thus, this congruence between Catholic teachings and pre-existing religious beliefs helps explain how Christianity could find an avenue into the lives of Fuan commoners and lower gentry. The promise of protection and salvation from the Lord of Heaven seemed to

them more powerful than that offered by other religious systems (on congruence, see Rambo 1993).

Moreover, as we have seen, if the missionaries were to hope for success in converting more people, accommodations had to be made. The priests had to offer their converts what they needed, and in a popular milieu devotional religiosity mattered most. It is in this area that we witness the more accommodating side of the Dominicans. Their order has always been depicted as uncompromising in matters of orthodoxy, and they have been partly blamed for the "collapse" of the old China mission. However, as J. S. Cummins has observed, it is time to abandon the image of the friars as "narrow-minded bigots sabotaging the efforts of the scholarly and accommodating [Jesuit] Fathers" (1993: 3). They faced many dilemmas in their practical ministry, and they tried as much as possible to modify the Catholic orthopraxis to suit the needs of Chinese converts without endangering what in their eyes was untouchable doctrine.

Devout Christians must have contributed greatly to shaping the cadence of a new Chinese-Christian time by pleading with the missionaries to adapt the strict observances of the church to the old rhythms of domestic and communal rituals. In this area we can detect the agency of Fuan Christians. Unfortunately, their initiatives can only be glimpsed indirectly through missionary reports, since writings by Fuan converts themselves are practically nonexistent. And yet such materials, if handled sensibly, can help to redress an imbalance in the literature, which for too long has concentrated on the deeds of foreign missionaries and consequently neglected the lives of Chinese Christians.

The composite picture of the Fuan community that I have tried to draw, using the liturgical calendar as a focal point, confirms many of the conclusions reached by scholars in recent years on the nature of the Christian community in Ming-Qing China, but it also shows that the eighteenth century did not bring the collapse of the mission.⁸⁶ For Mindong converts, ancestor reverence and communal cults as parts of daily life were indeed areas of conflict. However, such conflict in the long run could be defused—though not completely eliminated—when entire families and villages were won over to the Lord of Heaven. At that point, the pressure would decrease to conform to certain local customs that were regarded as "superstitious" by missionaries and converts, and Christian religious practices, as long as they did not provoke public confrontation, would be seen as confined to villages and

families and would be tolerated by local society. Through selective rejection, negotiation, and encouragement of congruent practices, Christians in Fuan in fact were able to find a niche in the local religious landscape and to survive after the Kangxi period in spite of government repressions. Thus, a balance between doctrinal rigidity and practical flexibility was found, and Chinese and Christian "times" continued to coexist. It was a precarious balance, but I would say that it remained so because of attempts at suppression by the central and provincial governments, not because of any intrinsic irreconcilability between Christian and local ritual life and liturgical time.⁸⁷

Abbreviations

- AGOP Archivum Generale Ordinis Praedicatorum (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome)
- AL Biblioteca Corsiniana, Accademia dei Lincei (Corsiniana Library, Lincei Academy, Rome)
- AMEP Archives du Séminaire des Missions Étrangères de Paris (Archives of the Foreign Missions Society, Paris)
- APSR Archivo de la Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario (Archives of the Dominican Province of the Holy Rosary, Manila and Avila)
- ARSI Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Jesuit Roman Archives, Rome)
- BC Biblioteca Casanatense (Casanatense Library, Rome)
- BNF Bibliothèque Nationale de France (French National Library, Paris)
- FHA Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan 中國第一歷史檔案館 (First Historical Archives of China, Beijing)
- MEP Missions Étrangères de Paris (Foreign Missions Society, Paris)
- OP Ordo Praedicatorum (Order of Preachers = Dominicans)
- OFM Ordo Fratrum Minorum (Order of Friars Minor = Franciscans)
- SIL Sinologisch Instituut (Sinological Institute), Leiden University
- SJ Societas Jesu (Society of Jesus = Jesuits)

Notes

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1. Chaves 1993: 149. Wu Li (1632–1718) wrote this poem in Macao in the 1680s. In a note to the poem he explained: "Dusk and dawn are marked only by the sound of the 'self-sounding bells.'" We thus know that here he refers to a clock and not to the tolling of a church bell. We also know it is at the beginning of a lunation, since the new moon starts rising in the western sky two or three days after conjunction.

2. "Why is it that they [i.e., the Jesuits] divide daily classes between *mao* [5:00 to 7:00 a.m.] and *you* [5:00 to 7:00 p.m.]? / They hear the bell's gentle ringing and study only at these two times" (Chaves 1993: 152). A few years later (1705), the Kangxi emperor, also in one of his poems, showed a fascination with the Western artifice of clocks and how they monitored time with precision: "Wheels move and time turns round, / Hands show the minutes as they change" (Spence 1975: 63).

3. See Landes 1983: 25; on railways and schedules, see *ibid.*: 285–286. On time keeping in China, see Wilkinson 2000: chap. 6.

4. Yang 1955. An exception would be the time-keeping practices (field clepsydras, drums, and other time signals) adopted in collective farming. See the reference to a Yuan-dynasty agricultural manual in Jami 1995: 174.

5. On the conceptions of time in different cultural traditions, see Ricoeur 1976; on liturgical time, see various articles in Eliade et al. 1987. On the circularity of ritual calendars, see the entry by Giulia Piccaluga in *ibid.*: III, 7–10. On the encounter of Chinese and Western chronology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Witek 1983 and Zürcher 1995.

6. For a general description of the Chinese religious calendar, see the entry by Laurence Thompson in Eliade et al. 1987: III, 323–327. On the Shang liturgical cycle and its calendar, which established important calendrical conventions in the Chinese tradition, see Keightley 2000: chaps. 3 and 4.

7. "Liturgy," a word of Greek origins referring to an act or work (*ergon*) performed by or for the people (*laïtos*), became an important concept in the history of religions only in the nineteenth century, when reform movements in European Christian worship resurrected it as a way to designate a particular set of cultic actions. In a general sense, scholars have come to define liturgy as "any system or set of rituals that is prescribed for public or corporate performance." Such systems entail socialization, and often temporalization by a calendar as well, so that "a principal effect of liturgy ... is to structure time, thereby making it available for conscious experience and intellectual comprehension. This in turn makes possible the further elaboration of liturgical

action." See the entry by Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., in Eliade et al. 1987: VIII, 580–583.

8. For a recent overview in English, see Chu 1997 as well as several articles in Malek 1998.

9. In line with the dominant paradigms endorsed by the church in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Adam Schall and Martino Martini SJ (1650s–1660s) did accept some elements of Chinese astrology, while Verbiest in the 1670s had a more rationalistic and negative attitude toward it, reflecting the changing climate with regard to astrology in the latter part of the seventeenth century in Europe. See Huang 1991b: 6–7; Martini 1998: I, 171–217; Golvers 1993: 73–74; Menegon 2000.

10. For a bibliographical note on Verbiest's *Wangzhan bian* (Critique of the falsities of divination), *Wangtui jixiong zhi bian* (Critique of the falsity of auspicious and inauspicious matters), and *Wangze bian* (Critique of hemerology), all published in 1670, see Huang 1991a: 15–16. According to classical Thomistic theology, there are four species of superstitions: "improper worship of the true God ('indebitus veri Dei cultus'); idolatry; divination; vain observances, which include magic and occult arts" (Herbermann et al. 1913–1914: XIV, 339). See also the *Summa Theologiae* II-II: secs. 92–96. While Chinese geomancy (*fengshui*) is probably more a form of magic than of divination, numerology and astrology are certainly divinatory arts in the Western sense. In spite of this, in early-seventeenth-century Europe only "judiciary astrology" (prediction of future events) was not accepted by the church, while "meteorological astrology" (prediction of weather and medical conditions) could be practiced.

11. On some manuscript works preserved in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI) that criticize geomancy and astrology, see Chan 2002, and Menegon 1995; see also Xu Zongze 1949: 110–111.

12. The Taipings proclaimed: "All the corrupt doctrines and perverted views of preceding almanacs are the results of the demons' cunning devices to deceive and delude mankind. We, your ministers, have eliminated them entirely; the years, months, days, and hours are all determined by our Heavenly Father. . . . How can any of them be good or bad? What is the use of choosing [among them]?" (quotation, Michael 1966–1971: II, 234; see also Smith 1991: 89).

13. As a matter of fact, Mei Wending and many other mid-Qing scientists ended up rejecting, as well, the Christian theologico-cosmological arguments that the Jesuits had connected to their astronomical and calendrical knowledge (Martzloff 1993–1994: 72). On Mei Wending and geomancy, see *ibid.*: 70; Smith 1991: 88.

14. On the spread of popular almanacs, see Smith 1991: 89; and 1992; as well as Huang 1996.

15. Leslie 1998 does not mention any Sino-Judaic religious calendar.

16. On Jewish rituals, see Pollack 1980: 293–294, 412. On the Kaifeng stelae and the sabbath, see Plaks 1999: esp. 44–45. Erik Zürcher calls this phenomenon "reductionism" as far as the Jewish rituals and lifestyle are concerned—that is, adoption of Chinese customs and reduction of Jewish ones. He also introduces the concept of a Chinese "cultural imperative," that is, the necessity that imported religions adapt to the Confucian order (Zürcher 1994).

17. An example is a late-imperial Sunnite calendar from the mosque of Tongzhou, near Beijing, titled "Schedule of fasting and worship of the Islamic doctrine for the year *wushen*, 34th year of the Guangxu reign of the Great Qing [1908]—taboo days of the 1,314th year after the death of the Noble Saint of the Western countries [Muhammad]." It consists of a simple sheet of yellow paper, with indications of the correspondences between the traditional dates of the Chinese year and the important celebrations and fasts of the Islamic tradition, listed under the Arabic name of the month. A good third of the space is dedicated to an exposition of the twelve Muslim commandments, a list of the important prayers to be recited daily, some of them identified by the Chinese hour, and a list of the twenty-eight bodily movements to be employed in prayer at certain precise times (Farjanel and Bouvat 1908).

18. *Shilu* of the Qing Yongzheng reign, j. 94: 4b–5b, as quoted in Leslie 1986: 124, with modifications.

19. The only present-day vestige of Muslim religious taboos in the practices of the Ding lineage of Chendai, near Quanzhou, studied by Gladney, is the omission of pork in the offerings to the ancestors, as stipulated in the genealogy. Gladney observes that the Ding celebrate ancestral worship four times a year, at the same times as their Han neighbors. Apparently only one special Muslim festival, the "cake-offering day" (1st day of the 6th month) has survived in Fujian (Gladney 1991: 270–271). On late-imperial Muslims, see Leslie 1981; 1983: 113–116; and 1986: 105–129; as well as Aziz Ben-Dor 2000.

20. On the study of popular Christianity in late-imperial China, see Standaert 1997: 593–595; Menegon 1998: 99–119; and Standaert 2001: 386–393.

21. On Aleni see Menegon 1994; "Scholar from the West" 1997.

22. A case in point is the Yan family in Zhangzhou, which converted in the 1630s and whose members are mentioned in eighteenth-century documents as being Christians.

23. For an overview of the Manila-Fuan connection, see Wills 1994.

24. On the relocation of the Franciscan mission from Mindong to Shandong, see Mungello 2001: 55–56.

25. Contemporary official statistics notoriously underestimate religious phenomena. The *Fuan shizhi* (1999: 1036–1037) reports 45,386 Catholics as of 1990 (8.56 percent of the total township population of 530,069).

26. *Fuan xianzhi* 1884: 9.7b, text of the "Inscription for the Reconstruction of the Ciyang Academy" by County Magistrate Du Zhong: "In the spring of the 11th year of the Qianlong era [1746], I was ordered to come and administer this city. [At the time] 20 to 30 percent of the local population was mired in the heretic teachings of the Western Ocean." In a vermilion-endorsed memorial by Fujian Provincial Surveillance Commissioner Gioro Yarhašan, we find mention of 3,000 families of converts (Gioro 1746). A comparison of the population data of Fuan county for the period between the 1391 census and the censuses of the Republican period (1941–1946) yields an average of about five people per household. This figure squares with what we know of family size in Fujian over time. Three thousand families would thus amount to a total of approximately 15,000 people; however, missionaries' sources give a number closer to 10,000, which may be more realistic. Taking the 1783 census of 123,007 as a basis (late-eighteenth-century censuses of Fujian are considered fairly reliable; see Ho 1959: 54), the percentage of Christians for the whole county would be roughly 8 percent. The number reported by officials (20 to 30 percent) is higher because they probably were considering the population of the major settlements only, where Christians were concentrated. For historical statistics on Fuan, see Chen 1991: 195.

27. Two crises touched the community in the Kangxi reign: the Calendar Controversy in the period 1664–1671 and the expulsion after 1707 of missionaries opposed to the Chinese rites and faithful to the Papal legate Mgr. De Tournon. In both cases, the absence of the Dominicans from Fuan was only temporary.

28. Report of Fr. Joaquin Royo (1741) in J. M. González 1952–1958: 372.

29. In the Ming, the *jinshi* and *juen* from Funing represented only 0.6 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively, of the Fujian provincial totals; in the Qing (1650–1820), the average was 0.6 percent and 0.4 percent respectively. Liu and Zhuang 1996: 152, 160, 212, 220.

30. Navarrete's *Controversias* (1677) as quoted in J. M. González 1955–1967: I, 297.

31. For details and further references on the vicissitudes of Funing Prefecture during the conquest, see Menegon 2002 and 2003.

32. Zhu 1985–1986: 395–397; Zheng 1992: 177; Riccio 1667.

33. Archives du Séminaire des Missions Étrangères de Paris (AMEP),

Chine, vol. 404: 81; Gioro 1746. In 1761, according to the "Relación" of Fr. Teradillos, there were eighty *beatas* in Muyang alone, and two hundred in the whole region of Fuan; see J. M. González 1955–1967: 503.

34. *Yongzheng chao* 1998: I, 257–258; *Lettres édifiantes* 1875–1877: III, 347; J. M. González 1955–1967: III, 159–171.

35. I base this statement on a number of Qianlong-period memorials on the 1746 anti-Christian campaign in Fuan, today preserved in Beijing, Taipei, and Paris.

36. The list, contained in the provincial-level interrogations of some arrested Christians, is preserved in AMEP, *Chine*, vol. 436: 151r. The books were authored by Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit priests. In Fuan, although many converts were illiterate, a number of them—male and female—could read the catechisms and the prayerbooks, and a few had undergone formal preparation for bureaucratic careers. Nevertheless, they were little involved in any sustained doctrinal discussion.

37. For a general evaluation of Christianity in late-Ming Fujian, see Zürcher 1990.

38. In the Portuguese dominions it was customary to follow the ancient ecclesiastical practice of numbering the days after Sunday, called *feriae*, from two to seven, starting on Monday (*feria secunda*, in Chinese *zhuer* or *zhanli er*, and ending on Saturday (*feria septima*, *zhuqi* or *zhanli qi*). Elsewhere, including Spain, the days after Sunday were numbered from one through six. Thus, although most Chinese Christians used the Portuguese method introduced by the Jesuits, the Spanish Dominicans numbered these days from *feria prima* to *feria sexta*. See Herbermann et al. 1913–1914: VI, 43; Varo 2000: 165.

39. Letter to Fr. Fabio de Fabj in Rome, written in Beijing, May 9, 1605, in Ricci 1911–1913: 264; see also Ricci 1942–1949: I, 271, n. 6.

40. Letter to Fr. Claudio Acquaviva, General of the Society of Jesus in Rome, written in Beijing, August 22, 1608: "The Christians come [to church] very frequently on Sundays and even more frequently on important feasts and on the major saints' days. Every year we give them a printed paper sheet [containing those dates] so that they can come [at the appointed time]." See Ricci 1911–1913: 359; also *Littera Annua*, 1589, quoted in Ricci 1942–1949: I, 270–271, n. 6.

41. Pfister 1932–1934: 116; Bernard 1945: 339. Pfister observes that no one knows why it was also translated into Syriac. Modern bibliographies are silent on the location of extant copies.

42. The text, whose printing was sponsored by Christians, is in Standaert and Dudink 2002: V, 301–333; compare a manuscript version copied by a convert in Hangzhou, Chinois 7344, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, copy at

Sinologisch Instituut, Leiden University. Elsewhere in Asia Christian converts engaged in the practice of copying or printing liturgical calendars based on the Chinese calendar. Christian calendars from China, for example, were sent to Japan in the late 1630s, after the Tokugawa shogunate forbade Christianity. Such calendars were copied by hand over and over by local underground Christians for the following two hundred years, without changes. A Japanese church calendar kept in the Nagasaki Prefectural Government Archives, copied on March 3, 1787, by the crypto-Christian Domingo Ikusuke from Urakami, is in fact based on a 1634 original. The Sundays and the saints' days written in Japanese kana are coupled with days in the regular Japanese calendar. Movable feasts continued to fall on the same dates regardless of astronomical changes for more than a century! See Murakami 1942; see also López Gay 1970: 270–271, 299; and Turnbull 1998: 138–141. On Christian concordances with the Chinese lunar calendar in the Catholic mission of Tonkin (Vietnam), see Forest 1998: III, 151–152.

43. Standaert and Dudink 2002: V, 303. *Fang, xu, mao*, and *xing* are four constellations among the twenty-eight in Chinese calendars. The days represented by these constellations are always Sundays in the Western calendar.

44. In reality, the date of Easter cannot be simply calculated based on the astronomical full moon, since it is based on an artificial "ecclesiastical full moon." Thus, special tables were prepared in Rome that were needed to set the date of Easter as the pivot for movable feasts. The authors of the *Method*, in fact, observed that "once the number of years [included in our calendrical tables] runs out, you will have to just wait for a master [i.e., a Jesuit] in the future to give you a [new] text to clarify [the matter]." Thus, the date of Easter had to be communicated from the West; see Standaert and Dudink 2002: V, 308.

45. Royo n.d. Although published in the 1740s, this calendar was closely modeled on earlier ones, rare examples of which survive in European libraries and archives. Unfortunately, on my visit to the Dominican Archives in Rome (Archivum Generale Ordinis Praedicatorum or AGOP) in November of 1998, I had to use the Latin translation of the Chinese original. The latter apparently had disappeared since it was last seen and partly photographed by José María González OP in the 1950s (see J. M. González 1952–1958: II, 435; a photograph of the first page of the "Lüeyan" is in I, 335). The passage I quote comes from "Ratio Calendarii perpetui a Sancta Dei Religione instituti explanatur," 9r; similar wording in Chinese can be found in Couplet n.d.

46. Male names such as Joaquin (father of Mary), Domingo (founder of the Dominicans), Raymundo (of Peñafort, a Medieval Dominican), or José (husband of Mary and protector of the China mission), and female names

such as Rosa (of Lima, Dominican Tertiary), Maria (the Virgin), or Catalina (Catherine of Siena, Dominican Tertiary), rendered in Chinese characters, were the most common. They may have been chosen regardless of the birthdays of converts but rather out of devotions in the Dominican tradition. See Sierra 1719–1739, passim; Bonniwell 1945, chap. 10, "The Dominican Calendar," 98–117.

47. In addition to the common custom of presenting food offerings every two weeks in the home shrine, a liturgy for ancestral rites as a seasonal festival was established by Zhu Xi, who suggested divination as the appropriate method to select the sacrificial days. However, by late-imperial times such divination was mostly abandoned in favor of fixed dates. See Ebrey 1991: 129, 183.

48. Indeed, sometimes existing almanacs were used by Christians to calculate liturgical feasts. Ricci, before a printed Christian calendar existed (1589), simply made notations of the feastdays on a common Chinese calendar to let his Christians in Zhaoqing (Guangdong) know the time for prayer in his absence. See Bürkler 1942: 9.

49. Varo 1720: 61b–62a. Earlier Jesuit catechisms were also critical of those same beliefs.

50. González de San Pedro 1706: 10a.

51. For examples in the region of Fuan, see Varo 1678: 358v.

52. See Pita-Moreda 1992: 231–234. On the meaning of idolatry for seventeenth-century missionaries in Latin America, see Bernard and Gruzinski 1988.

53. Varo 1678: 361v. Clearly the father of the Christian was not a convert.

54. Barend ter Haar observes: "The Gathering Head was held personally responsible for financing the collective banquet. The festivals were communal enterprises, which is proven by the very fact that the less privileged ran into financial difficulties because of the equal rotation of organizational responsibilities" (1995: 22). A seventeenth-century description from Guangdong is quoted by Haar: "When the head of a gathering is poor, he will sell off property to do it. In extreme cases, they sell off children, [for] they do not dare to retreat from the area" (ibid.: 21). For examples in the region of Fuzhou, see Szony 2002: 190–191, 284.

55. A similar case occurred a few years later at the very end of the Kangxi reign in Shanxi, where a magistrate exempted Christians from contributing to a local religious festival. Responding to the appeal against his decision presented by non-Christian villagers, he is reported to have answered: "The religion of the Lord of Heaven does not allow Christians to contribute silver for operas [to be performed in temples]. Why do you want to oblige them to do so? If Christians wanted to oblige you to contribute money to buy incense to

be burned in front of their Lord of Heaven, would you give silver to them [for that purpose]? No, you would not, because you are not Christians. Thus, the same applies to you." See a letter of Mgr. Eugenio Piloti OFM to the Procurator of Propaganda Fide, Fr. Arcangelo Miralta, dated August 24, 1735, preserved in the Archives of Propaganda Fide, Rome, as quoted in Margiotti 1958: 444.

56. In 1699 forty converted lower degree holders in Fuan bribed the local magistrate to be exempted from participating in the cult to Confucius; see J. M. González 1955–1967: I, 627. In 1730, seven years after the Yongzheng emperor's strict prohibition of Christianity had been issued, a number of Christian lower degree holders were arrested in Fuan and obliged by the county magistrate to participate in the annual rituals to the local city god. However, they promised to pay a large amount of money (600 taels) to be exempted from the ritual, and, finally, after the intercession of the local military official, who feared that complications could develop, they were exempted. See the letter from Fuan by Fr. Juan Alcober, February 27, 1730, in J. M. González 1952–1958: II, 451. In the late nineteenth century conflicts between Catholics and non-Catholics over temple festivals and other rituals were countless. At that time religious tensions between converts and other villagers were fueled by the legal meddling of foreign priests and consuls, but they also had deep roots in daily disputes having nothing to do with religion. In our seventeenth-century case, the missionaries did not intervene at all. On the nineteenth-century cases, see a number of essays in Bays 1996.

57. See, for example, Riccio 1667: 67v–68r, 163v–164r; Varo 1678: 351r, 358v.

58. The Jesuits in China invented the category of "civil" rituals and applied it to ancestral rites and to the rites in honor of Confucius, thus trying to salvage their "Confucian Christianity." Jensen (1997) misses this important point in his attempt to "manufacture" the "Confucians" as a sort of religious order in the eyes of the Jesuits (see Standaert 1999). On a similar Jesuit position in India, see Zupanov 1996: 1201–1223; and 1999: 97–101. On the tablets in China, see Dehergne 1978.

59. There is an enormous seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western-language literature on the Chinese rites. A cache of Chinese manuscripts in the ARSI (*Japonica-Sinica* I, 39–42; published in Standaert and Dudink 2002: IX–XI) reflects the heated debates on rituals in Fujian and Zhejiang in the 1660s to 1690s between Jesuits and their converts, on one hand, and the Dominicans with some of their converts, on the other. On these materials see Lin 1994; Standaert 1995: esp. 15–21; Huang 1995; and Li Tiangang 1998.

60. These are the words of Master Zeng, a disciple of Confucius, in the *Lunyu*, 1/9. See Ames and Rosemont 1998: 73.

61. Quotation from the *Lunyu*, 2/5; Ames and Rosemont 1998: 77, modified.

62. On this idea among converts, see, for example, Standaert 1988; 1995; and 2001: 633.

63. Letter to Artus de Lionne MEP (1655–1713), in *Sinica Franciscana*, VII, 248–249, as translated in Chan 1996: 430. In the period between the 1650s and the 1690s, the Jesuit-Dominican debate on ritual issues, involving some Fujianese Christians, was still open, and a uniform position among all missionaries had not yet been reached.

64. Varo 1671, as quoted in J. M. González, 1955–1967: I, 400.

65. In 1537 Pope Paul III's constitution "Altitudo divini consilii" granted an indult to the peoples of the West and Southern Indies, limiting compulsory abstention from work to only Sundays and twelve major feasts, for a total of around sixty days. This constitution was not initially applied in China by the Jesuits, but was officially imposed by Rome on the China mission in 1685. For the text of the constitution "Altitudo divini consilii," see *Collectanea* 1907: 30–31.

66. *Littera Annua* of 1610 by Fr. Nicolas Trigault, quoted in Bürkler 1942: 3.

67. Quoted in Bürkler 1942: 3. Here it is necessary to qualify the opinions of these early missionaries. Christian worship in fact resembled in its regularity the strict routine of certain lay Buddhist groups, such as the followers of Luo Qing, who had periodic meetings, usually twice a month, with intense devotional activity (see Overmeyer 1976: 187–188). Franciscan missionaries reported such sectarian activities in Shandong in the early eighteenth century (see Tiedemann 1996).

68. See the catechetical texts in Standaert and Dudink 2002: I, 71 and 82 (Ruggieri); 93 (Ricci); 156–159 (Vagnone); 447–448 and 459–461 (Da Rocha).

69. An instruction by Propaganda Fide solicited by the Dominican Juan Bautista de Morales, dated September 12, 1645, clearly applied to Chinese Christians the 1537 constitution "Altitudo divini consilii" on the matter of feastdays (see *Collectanea* 1907: 31). However, the objections of the Jesuits blocked its universal implementation in China. In an instruction by the Holy Office of March 23, 1656, the question was taken up again, and the response was favorable to the Jesuit position: "The positive law [of the church] regarding fasting, the observance of feastdays, and the yearly confession and communion must be communicated by the missionaries to the Chinese Christians as

obligatory, under pain of mortal sin. At the same time, however, it is possible to give explanations of reasons for which the faithful can be excused from the observation of the precepts. At the discretion of the Pontiff, it is possible to concede to missionaries the faculty of dispensation in particular cases only, following their own judgment" (ibid.: 39). After the 1685 imposition of the precept in the Vicariates Apostolic of East Asia as defined in "Altitudo divini consilii," respect for it remained problematic. As observed by the Vicar Apostolic of Sichuan in the late 1760s, "Among the Ten Commandments ... the third one [on feastdays] is the one the Chinese, still weak in the faith, are less inclined to obey." For that reason, the Holy Office in 1769 gave a special dispensation of twelve years to Sichuanese Christians, prescribing attendance of mass in the morning but allowing work on the afternoons of Sundays and precept feastdays, except for a total prohibition of labor on four major feasts. Furthermore, in 1796 the special condition of isolated and inaccessible regions of China was accepted as a reason to excuse Christians from attending Sunday and feastday masses in most cases (ibid.: 299–300 and 389; see also Bürkler 1942: 38–41).

70. Varo 1720, 5.15b–17b. The church's general obligations of fasting in the seventeenth century were the following: all the forty days of Lent; the Ember Days (the days of fasting of the four seasons, i.e., Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday of Lent, after Whitsunday, after September 14, and after December 13); and the vigils of precept feastdays. Strictly speaking, one was allowed to eat only in the evening. However, the church tolerated that the main meal be taken at noon and that a "coenula" (small dinner) be eaten in the evening. Meat, eggs, and dairy products were forbidden on fasting days. Nevertheless, it was stressed that the fasting precepts could be differentiated according to local circumstances. Thus Pope Paul III, in his 1537 constitution "Altitudo divini consilii," had allowed special rules for the West and Southern Indies, where fasts were compulsory only on the seven Fridays of Lent and on the vigils of Christmas and Easter, for a total of nine days, a rule applied to China starting in 1685. Moreover, the church precept could be overruled when it would either harm health or impede the exercise of one's obligations. Thus people with heavy jobs would be exempted. Also, the poor who only had a meager diet were excused. Finally, abstinence days in the China mission, similar to those in Europe, included each Friday and Saturday outside Lent, all the days of Lent except Sundays, the Ember Days, and thirteen feastdays, for a total of 155 days. On seventeenth-century practice in Europe and China, see Bürkler 1945: 260.

71. On the meaning of the Chinese word used for "fasting" (*zhai*), see Malek 1985. For an early missionary description of an array of Chinese fasting

practices, see Intorcetta 1668a and 1668b, summarized in Margiotti 1958: 34–35.

72. Yü 1981: 87–90; Kern 1992: 71, 328. Ricci wrote in his *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* that there were three reasons for fasting: penance, subduing of passions, and renunciation of pleasures and lust. He also classified the types of fasts (1985: 279–284). However, in the end he seems to dismiss fasting as a practice unworthy of much attention. On the motivations for abstinence from meat among late-Ming Buddhists and reactions to the Jesuit position, see Handlin Smith 1999: 62–63.

73. Besides Martini, Varo too observed the impossibility of respecting all the fasting days prescribed in the Roman liturgical calendar: "I do not know if one out of ten Christians could comply with all the fastings of Lent and the vigils of the [liturgical] year, as experience has taught us" (1685: 25r). On dispensations for the China mission, see Furtado 1700: 11, note b; *Collectanea* 1907: 38, 338.

74. See Bürkler 1945: 267. The matter of fasting and abstinence during the Chinese New Year was repeatedly brought up by missionaries in Tonkin and in China in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, an indication that it remained a point of contention and that missionaries and Christians ignored repeated orders from Rome strictly to respect the prescribed fasts and abstinences. In 1768, for example, the Vicar Apostolic of Fujian, Francisco Pallas OP, residing in the region of Fuan, wrote to Rome: "Since the second day of the first moon of the coming year coincides with Ash Wednesday [February 8, 1769], local missionaries advanced a doubt to me: must the Chinese fast and abstain from meat on that day? I see in a perpetual calendar in Chinese characters, printed by order of ancient missionaries, a note: 'If the first Chinese moon falls into Lent, the Chinese shall not be obliged to abstain from meat or to fast in the last day of the last moon and in the first two days of the first moon.' [This note can in fact be found in Royo n.d.: 5r.] From this I infer that this custom has been approved and published by ancient missionaries in this empire, since many Chinese have in their hands this Chinese-language calendar so as to know when the Holy Mother Church celebrates the saints. I do not dare to give a response on this custom. I pray the Sacred Congregation [of Propaganda Fide] to give me an answer for the following years, whether this custom is to be censored and eradicated or tolerated." The Holy Office responded on July 12, 1770: "We order [Propaganda Fide] to send once more the already printed decrees [decrying this custom, issued in 1663 and again in 1760] and to communicate in writing to the Vicars Apostolic of Tonkin and of Fujian that they have the duty to apply those decrees and to inform the Sacred Congregation about their diligence in

executing them. They should also first of all delete the note read in the Chinese calendar, that is, that in the first three days of the New Year [*sic*] Christians are dispensated from abstaining from meat in case those days fall into Lent." The last act in this long process of negotiation came only on June 10, 1868, when Rome granted the faculty of dispensation in matters of fasting and abstinence on the Chinese New Year to the Vicars Apostolic of China and the neighboring kingdoms. See *Collectanea* 1907: 276 and 302 (quote).

75. Riccio 1667: 221r. The chapter of the "Hechos" recounting Huang's life is titled "Vida y muerte dichosa de Andrés Hoang, de la tercera orden de Santo Domingo."

76. Modern authors such as Garcia (1947) have offered a different surname for this woman (Liu). However, according to a list of *beatas* dated 1695, her last name was Chen (see AMEP, *Chine*, vol. 404: 81). This is confirmed in some missionary sources (Gentili 1887–1888), which call her "Tein," the Fuan-dialect pronunciation of "Chen" (see Ibañez 1941–1943). In 1695 Petronilla was seventy, and thus her birth year should be around 1625. According to Riccio, she was received into the Third Order by Fr. Capillas in the 1640s at age eighteen, thus confirming that she was born in the 1620s. Her death occurred in the 1710s, since she was commemorated in the Manila Dominican chapter of 1720. See biographical data on Petronilla in Riccio 1667: 161r ff.

77. I found the number, names, and ages of *beatas* in a letter written in 1695 by the Christian Virgins of Fuan to the Visitation Sisters of the Convent of Beaune (France) (see AMEP, *Chine*, vol. 404: 81). On the Third Order's rules in Fuan, see Royo n.d.

78. See Bornet 1948; Dehergne 1956; Margiotti 1962–1963.

79. On similarities between Christian and non-Christian religious groups, see Standaert 1988: passim. On "sutra-recitational sects," see Naquin 1985: 261.

80. "Meigui shiwu duan yin" (Introduction to the fifteen mysteries of the rosary), in Varo 1668: 46a–47b.

81. Gentili 1887–1888: III, 160, referring to the 1850s. Elderly churchgoers still chant the same way today during mass, as I witnessed in Beijing in the early 1990s.

82. From some anti-Christian memorials of 1637 preserved in Xu Changzhi's *Shengchao poxie ji*, it appears that local officials considered Christian and Nonaction groups to be very similar in their beliefs, especially in their hostility to ancestor worship. On the sectarian groups of southern Zhejiang and northern Fujian at the time, see Lian 1989: 55–61; Ma and Han 1992: 634–640; Haar 1992: 231–233.

83. On Jesuit popular Christianity in late-Ming Fujian, see Zürcher 1985:

359–375. A recently published primary source on Fujianese popular Christianity, covering the 1640s, is Gouvea 1998. On daily life in the Jesuit mission of Jiangnan (1670s), see Golvers 1999.

84. See the comments of Jesuit converts in Li Jiubiao n.d.: 8.1a: "The rules of the [Christian] teachings are very strict, and they are not easy to follow"; and Li Jiugong n.d.: 1.15a: "There are people who are attracted by the orthodoxy of the Heavenly Teachings, but then they are put off by its severity, and they balk." See also Zürcher 1997: 633.

85. In that year, the Vicar Apostolic of Fujian, Charles Maigrot MEP (1652–1730), officially forbade the "Chinese rites" (i.e., ancestor worship and the cult of Confucius). In two letters now kept in the ARSI, a prominent Christian from Zhangzhou baptized by Jesuits, Yan Mo, lamented, "This is like being in burning fire!" when Fr. Magino Ventallol OP (1647–1732) threatened denial of the sacraments unless Yan renounce the forbidden rites. For a summary of the letters, see Chan 1996: 436.

86. See, for instance, Zürcher 1997: 650: "The two faces of early Chinese Christianity constituted an internal contradiction that never was solved, and that no doubt has contributed to its final breakdown in the early eighteenth century."

87. This claim applies only to the period before the Opium War. In Menegon 2002 I have further explored the relationship between the state and local Christian communities in Mindong during the eighteenth century, using records preserved at the First Historical Archives of China and elsewhere.

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