

清初“礼仪之争”中的文化沟通

“The Rites Controversy” and Cultural Communication

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[英文提要]

The history of Catholicism in China has been marked by confrontation and debate over traditional Chinese feudal customs and Christian doctrine. This conflict, as embodied in the Rites Controversy, has great cultural and religious significance. It represents China's early reflections on the cultural disparity between East and West, and a challenge to old customs of questionable value.

If Christian missionaries and Chinese converts had openly debated the issues, the Rites Controversy could have promoted Sino - Western cultural dialogue and stirred the stagnant waters of China's feudalistic traditionalism. Always, the Chinese emperor chose a simplistic approach towards all things foreign, theological and controversial, and ordered a total ban on religion. The imperial edict reflected a general ignorance and disdain towards religion and the value of open debate on matters of doctrine.

This paper aims to critique contemporary criticisms of the old controversy. Modern day criticisms once again reflect the lack of intellectual objectivity, and the failure to appreciate the importance of free discussion in academia. Many people still look to the established authority for the final word on controversial issues, thus continuing the stranglehold on healthy

academic or religious debate.

In this 21st century, we should be able to revisit the Rite Controversy with an enlightened attitude. We ought not accept the uncritical, populist view. Instead, we should take a fresh look at the issues from the perspective of religious freedom, individual human rights, and the dignity of the academic enterprise.

As china evolves historically, we have abolished old customs and superstitions that stand in the way of progress, e. g. the worship of heaven, ancestral worship, and the veneration of Confucius. However, recent trends suggest that superstition is on the rise again. The academic community must take note and issue warning.

康熙执政时期,天主教在华的耶稣会士、多明我会及方济各会的传教士,由于对中国传统礼仪的态度不同而发生争执,导致康熙皇帝与罗马教廷之间的冲突,史称“礼仪之争”,在法国被称为“中国事件”。

自十七世纪中叶开始,这一思想之争发展为传教方法之争,前后近一百年。这一争论包括三部分:(1)“创造主”译名问题;(2)祭孔祀祖问题;(3)康熙与罗马教皇的关系问题。

这一宗教争论本来应当由传教士及教徒自己争论解决,但耶稣会依附于中国皇帝,多次向中国皇帝上进谗言,打小报告,反使皇帝得以以行政手段粗暴干预,使这一争论循不正常途径,给中国文化的可悲“胜利”创造了条件。因而这也是一个文化冲突问题。中国传统文化第一次遭到正式的严肃质疑。对于理论争论,中国皇帝还不太适应。他们感兴趣的是唯我独尊,一言九鼎,“礼乐征伐自天子出”。吵吵嚷嚷,成何体统?

一种古老文化自身缺乏生命力,也难以治愈自己的痼疾,需要