

“罪过”:在明清之际耶儒对话中 谈“sin”的翻译与诠释

“Zuiguo”: On the Translation and
Interpretation of “Sin” in the Dialogues between
Catholicism and Confucianism in Ming and Qing Dynasties in China

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Abstract: Ever since the Ming-Qing Dynasty, the Christianity has been in China for four hundred years, however, as one of the basic concepts in Christianity, “sin” always could not be understood or even rejected by Chinese people. It is not only because of the big difference between the Christianity tradition and the Chinese culture, but also because of the misunderstanding from the translation of “sin”. This essay points out that firstly it is because historically missionaries in Ming-Qing Dynasty translated “sin” into “crime”, and secondly it is because anti-Christian Confucius scholars severely criticized the Christian concept “sin”. The author offers analysis on the Chinese understanding of “sin” from the perspective of anti-Christian Confucius scholars. Besides, through clarifying the Catholic theological thought on “sin” in Ming and Qing

Dynasties, and by illustrating the related statements of “sin” in Neo-Confucius tradition, the essay tries to find out the basis on which Christianity and Confucianism could understand each other or even have a dialogue. The essay suggests that translating “sin” as “Zuiguo” (transgression) would better enable the Chinese people to understand and accept the Christian concept “sin”.

Keywords: sin, transgression, zuiguo, religious dialogue

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自明末清初以来,基督宗教在中国的传播已经有四百年的历史,中国的基督徒人数也已经达到几千万,但是有一个观念却始终不大能为中国人所接受,甚至成为中国人接纳基督宗教的一个重大障碍,这个观念不是“上帝”、不是“耶稣基督”、也不是“恩典”,而是“罪”,以及与这个观念相联系的“审判”和“地狱”。其中的原因,不仅是因为基督宗教传统与中国文化传统之间存在着诸多的差异,将基督宗教的“sin”翻译为“罪”可能也是导致中国人对这个观念误解的一个重要原因。所以,有不少人写文章探讨“罪”的汉语翻译问题,^①也有人认为“sin”根本不可翻译,^②更多的人则在将“sin”翻译为“罪”的基础上作进一步的诠释,以澄清基督宗教中“罪”的各种含义。笔者并非《圣经》学者,也非语言学专家,不可能从语言学或翻译学的角度提出超越前人的意见,本文所要探讨的

① 参刘小枫主编,《道与言——华夏文化与基督文化相遇》,上海:上海三联书店,1995年,第770-787页。[See Liu Xiaofeng, ed., *Dao and Logos: the Encountering of Chinese Culture and Christian Culture* (Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing Corporation, 1995), 770-787.]

② 作为英国语言学会及香港翻译学会会士,周兆祥博士就认为“sin”不可翻译,翻译为“罪”会使人产生很大误解。参“《Playboy》访问周兆祥”,<http://www.simonchau.hk/Chinese-B5/inthepress/playboy1.htm>, <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/>