

## Chapter 3

# Catholicism in Taiwan, History and Anthropology

### 3.1 The Chinese Rites Controversy

It is quite common, in many Taiwanese Catholic homes, to find ancestors' shrines (*Shen-an* 神案 and *Shen-kan* 神龕), or at least, pictures representing familial ancestors. During the Chinese New Year, Taiwanese Catholics burn incense and offer food and wine to the ancestors' tablets. This is considered a way of venerating the dead. Taiwanese Catholics, especially if newly converted, often wonder whether these traditional ancestor-veneration practices are compatible with the Catholic faith. It is a question with a history that has very deep roots, dating back four centuries, beginning in the time of Matteo Ricci with the so-called "Chinese Rites Controversy." The Chinese Rites Controversy erupted in the 17th Century and was not resolved until the 20th. The term "Chinese Rites" does not refer to any indigenous Chinese rituals, but to three specific customs. First, periodic ceremonies were performed in honor of Confucius, in temples or halls dedicated to the well-respected Chinese philosopher. Second, the veneration of the familial dead, a practice found in every social class and manifested by various forms of piety including prostration, incense burning, serving food, etc. Third, the missionary use of the terms *Tian* (天 heaven) and *Shang-di* (上帝 lord of heaven) to convey the Christian concept of God<sup>1</sup>.

Contacts between the Chinese world and Catholic missionaries started very early, since Giovanni Montecorvino, a thirteenth-century Franciscan missionary introduced the Gospel to Mongol-ruled China. But it was 300 years later that the Jesuit Francis Xavier started to evangelize the Chinese people. During his mission work in India and Japan, he realized what kind

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1. Dy Aristotle S.J. Chan, *Weaving a dream: reflections for Chinese-Filipino Catholics today* (Quezon City: Jesuit Communications, 2000).

of high regard these people had for China. He was already on his way to China when struck by illness, and he died on the island of Shangchuan, off the Chinese coast, in 1552.

In the same year, Matteo Ricci was born. Thirty years later, in 1582, he arrived in Macao from Goa where he was ordained as a priest. One year later Ricci, with one other Jesuit, Michele Ruggieri, entered China. If the Dominican friar, Gaspar da Cruz, was actually the first modern missionary to China, where he stayed but a short time, the Jesuits under Matteo Ricci were the first to give a solid basis to the missions in the Celestial Empire. Ricci, in spite of South Asia missionaries (Dominican and Franciscan who arrived in 1633, but were expelled from China four years later<sup>2</sup>, was firmly persuaded that the Chinese culture was deeply linked with Confucian teaching and philosophy, so he decided that Christianity must be adapted to Chinese culture, otherwise, there would be no possibilities for the Catholic faith to be accepted in China. Because the relationship between power, society, and Confucian teaching was so deeply rooted, Ricci's understanding of the Chinese world was based on the conviction that the whole Chinese social system was governed by the observance of *xiao* (孝) or filial piety. In 1603 AD Ricci, as a superior of the Chinese mission, sanctioned an approval tolerating the rites where no clear hint of superstition existed. Ricci forbade prayers of petition and the burning of paper money but allowed the burning of incense and the offering of candles, flowers, and food. In the latter case, Ricci denied that the dead benefited from the food offered them, but allowed the practice because it was the Chinese way of caring for the dead, to act "as if the dead were living" (事死如事生).

As to the ceremonies in honor of Confucius, Ricci said:

The real temple of the literati is that of Confucius...To that place at every new moon and full moon come the magistrates of the city, with the usual genuflections, and they light candles to him and place incense in the censer placed before the altar. [They do this] without reciting any prayers to him or asking anything of him, just as we said concerning their dead<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to remember that Chinese literates did not accept any scholar who did not venerate Confucius<sup>4</sup>. For this reason, Ricci studied the Chinese classics, and there he discovered that "Confucianism was essentially compatible with Christianity, developing out of a context of monotheism

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2. Brucker, Joseph, *Matteo Ricci*, The Catholic Encyclopedia. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, New York, 1912, accessed March 9, 2022, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13034a.htm>.

3. Mark D. Luttio, "The Chinese Rites Controversy (1603-1742): a Diachronic and Synchronic Approach," *Worship* 68 (1994): 293.

4. Motte, Joseph S.J., 天主教史 (Taizhong: Guanqi 光文化事業, 1964).

and only later acquiring polytheistic accretions”<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, Confucianism could become the first step to Chinese people understanding Christianity, subsequently, missionaries could start to preach the Catholic faith.

In order to better understand how the controversy about Chinese Rites was relevant inside the Jesuits Order, we have to know that Ricci’s successor, Longobardi, was of a different mind. Finally in 1628, when Emmanuel Diaz (Junior) was vice-provincial, a meeting was called to study the question, but no decision was reached<sup>6</sup>.

In the 1630s, The Pope allowed the members of the other major religious orders to work in China. This decision was a political one because, in addition to different views about the religion of the Chinese, there was another cause of discord between the Jesuits and the Dominicans. The former were protected by Portugal and their protectors were at Macao. The latter were Spaniards, and they looked to Manila for support. Juan Baptista Morales, a Dominican missionary who had been in the Philippines, denounced the Jesuits to the bishop in Manila and submitted to the *Pro-paganda Fide* in Rome a series of seventeen propositions representing the questionable missionary practices of the Jesuits in China. Morales described the Confucian ceremonies and the ancestor cult as religious observances. Relying solely on Morales’ testimony, Pope Innocent X issued a Decree in 1645 that prohibited Chinese Christians from participating in the Chinese rites.

Wanting their side of the story to be heard, the Jesuits sent their own representative, Martino Martini, to Rome. Martini explained to the theologians in Rome that the Chinese rites were civil and political in nature. They only seemed religious because religious terms like “altar” were used. He did not deny that the rites, in the course of time, had acquired a superstitious color, but in their pristine form, the rites were purely civil and political. Besides, the Jesuits made sure that Chinese Catholics did not participate in the superstitious portions of the rite. In 1656, the new Pope, Alexander VII allowed participation in the rites *Proud Exposita* (as explained)<sup>7</sup>.

For the next fifty years, the Christian adaptation of the rites was practiced, though the members of the different religious orders (also of the same order) continued to debate among themselves. The next step was made on 26 March 1693, when Charles Maigrot, of the Missions Etrangères, vicar Apostolic of Fujian, issued a mandate condemning the Chinese Rites because according to him the description of the rites given by Martini was inaccurate. In 1700, the Jesuits in Beijing, in an effort to advance their cause in Rome, appealed to the emperor Kangxi (康熙) to obtain the authentic meaning of the rites. They wrote a petition describing the rites and added their own interpretation, and asked for the emperor’s judgment as to whether their understanding was correct. The document says in part:

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5. Luttio, “The Chinese Rites Controversy,” 294.

6. Brucker, Joseph, *Matteo Ricci*.

7. Chan, *Weaving a dream*.

Performance of the ceremony of sacrifice to the dead is a means of showing sincere affection for members of the family and thankful devotion to ancestors of the clan (...). It is not true that good luck and fortune are being sought thereby (...). The real purpose of it is that they shall not forget their relatives of the same clan, but shall keep them in memory forever and without end<sup>8</sup>.

The emperor replied as follows:

What is here written is very good, and is in harmony with the Great Way. To reverence Heaven, to serve ruler and parents, to be respectful towards teachers and elders – this is the code of all people of the empire. So this is correct, and there is no part that requires emendation<sup>9</sup>.

The petition and the emperor's reply were sent to Rome, but instead of settling the question, the emperor's declaration was taken as an insult to the spiritual authority of the Pope<sup>10</sup>. In 1704, after several years of investigations, Pope Clement XI declared the rites as superstitious and prohibited Christians from participating in ceremonies in honor of Confucius and the ancestors. The declaration gained further when Clement XI issued a papal bull in 1715, *Ex Illa Die*, unequivocally condemning the Chinese rites:

Pope Clement XI wishes to make the following facts permanently known to all the people in the world (...)

I. The West calls Deus [God] the creator of Heaven, Earth, and everything in the universe. Since the word Deus does not sound right in the Chinese language, the Westerners in China and Chinese converts to Catholicism have used the term "Heavenly Lord" (Shangdi) for many years. From now on such terms as "Heaven" and "Shangdi" should not be used: Deus should be addressed as the Lord of Heaven, Earth, and everything in the universe. The tablet that bears the Chinese words "Reverence for Heaven" should not be allowed to hang inside a Catholic church and should be immediately taken down if already there.

II. The spring and autumn worship of Confucius, together with the worship of ancestors, is not allowed among Catholic converts. It is not allowed even though the converts appear in the ritual as bystanders, because to be a bystander in this ritual is as pagan as to participate in it actively.

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8. Luttio, "The Chinese Rites Controversy," 299.

9. Luttio, 299.

10. Chan, *Weaving a dream*.

III. Chinese officials and successful candidates in the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations, if they have been converted to Roman Catholicism, are not allowed to worship in Confucian temples on the first and fifteenth days of each month. The same prohibition is applicable to all the Chinese Catholics who, as officials, have recently arrived at their posts or who, as students, have recently passed the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations.

IV. No Chinese Catholics are allowed to worship ancestors in their familial temples.

V. Whether at home, in the cemetery, or during the time of a funeral, a Chinese Catholic is not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. He is not allowed to do so even if he is in company with non-Christians. Such a ritual is heathen in nature regardless of the circumstances.

Despite the above decisions, I have made it clear that other Chinese customs and traditions that can in no way be interpreted as heathen in nature should be allowed to continue among Chinese converts. The way the Chinese manage their households or govern their country should by no means be interfered with. As to exactly what customs should or should not be allowed to continue, the papal legate in China will make the necessary decisions. In the absence of the papal legate, the responsibility of making such decisions should rest with the head of the China mission and the Bishop of China. In short, customs and traditions that are not contradictory to Roman Catholicism will be allowed, while those that are clearly contradictory to it will not be tolerated under any circumstances<sup>11</sup>.

The Kangxi emperor was not happy with Clement's decree and banned Christian missions in China.

Reading this proclamation, I have concluded that Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them because they do not understand larger issues as we understand them in China. There is not a single Westerner versed in Chinese works, and their remarks are often incredible and ridiculous. To judge from this proclamation, their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism. I have never seen a document that contains so much nonsense. From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble<sup>12</sup>.

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11. Dale A Johnson, *Searching for Jesus on the silk road*. [in English] (Lulu Com, 2013).

12. Dan J. Li, *China in Transition: 1517-1911* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969).

In 1742 Benedict XIV reiterated in his papal bull *Ex quo singulari* Clement XI's decree and settled the question until Pius XII. Benedict demanded that missionaries in China take an oath forbidding them to discuss the issue again. As a final declaration, the bull required all missionaries to China to take an oath of submission to the papal decree. The pledge was worded, in part, as follows:

I, N (...) Missionary sent to China (...) will obey fully and faithfully the apostolic precept and command regarding the Rites and Ceremonies of China (...) and I will make every effort that this same obedience be rendered by all Chinese Christians (...) I will never allow the Rites and Ceremonies in China (...) to be put into practice by these same Christians (...) So may God help me and his Holy Apostles<sup>13</sup>.

Rome, having spoken, no more could be said on the question, but it may be noted that the Bull *Ex quo singulari* was a terrible blow to the missions in China; there were fewer Christians than there formerly had been and none among the higher classes, as were the princes and mandarins of the court of Kangxi<sup>14</sup>. From 1742 until the 1930s, the Chinese rites controversy faded into the background as more momentous events took place in China. The periodic persecutions of the Chinese Christians, the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, the Chinese war with Russia and Japan, the Boxer Rebellion, the First World War, and the Japanese aggression – all these took precedence over the Church's problems. In all this time, the decree of 1742 remained in effect, and every missionary who went to China had to take the oath against the Chinese rites<sup>15</sup>.

In the 1930s, events elsewhere prompted Rome's reconsideration of the Chinese rites question. In 1932, some Catholic students at Sophia University in Tokyo refused to participate in ceremonies paying reverence to the country's war dead. These ceremonies were obligatory for all students. Furthermore, in 1932, the Japanese invaders of Manchuria made the reverence for Confucius obligatory on all citizens as a way of promoting civic unity<sup>16</sup>. This created a serious dilemma for Manchuria's native Catholics.

Both the Japanese and the Manchurian Catholics saw the government-imposed rites as contrary to the teachings of the Catholic religion. In both instances, Church authorities asked the ruling government whether the rites were religious or civil in nature. The Japanese government replied that the rites were civil manifestations of loyalty and had nothing to do with religion. Rome then issued separate decrees addressed to the Catholics of Japan and Manchuria, giving them permission to participate in the rites

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13. Luttio, "The Chinese Rites Controversy," 303.

14. Brucker, Joseph, *Matteo Ricci*.

15. Chan, *Weaving a dream*.

16. Chan.

without any qualms of conscience. Given these developments in Japan and *Manchuguo*, the *Propaganda Fide* in Rome decided that the same permissions should be granted to the Catholics in China, where the question of the rites first arose three hundred years earlier. Pope Pius XII issued an instruction, entitled *Plane compertum est*, which allowed Chinese Catholics to participate in civil ceremonies honoring Confucius and the familial dead. The instruction lays down the principle guiding the decision from Rome:

It is abundantly clear that in the regions of the Orient some ceremonies, although they may have been involved with pagan rites in ancient times, have – with the changes in customs and thinking over the course of centuries – retained merely the civil significance of piety towards the ancestors or of love of the fatherland or of courtesy towards one’s neighbors<sup>17</sup>.

The 1939 instructions also lifted the obligation of all missionaries to take the oath against the Chinese rites. In practice, Catholics were permitted to be present at ceremonies in honor of Confucius in Confucian temples or in schools, and the erection of an image of Confucius or tablets with his name on them were permitted in Catholic schools. The Catholic magistrate and students were allowed to passively attend public ceremonies, which have the appearance of superstition. The instructions also assured that it was allowed to bow before the dead or their images. Ending the oath on the Chinese rites, which was prescribed by Benedict XIV, was considered not fully in accord with recent regulations and thus considered superfluous.

Despite the Church’s sanctioned approval, the methodology of Matteo Ricci remained suspect until 1958, when Pope John XIII, by decree in his encyclical *Principes Pastorum*, proposed that Ricci become “the model of missionaries.” Around that time in Rome, the Council of Vatican II (1962–1965) was convoked. One of the principal topics of the Council emphasizes the noteworthy importance of bishops undertaking the appropriate implantation of the Church in other countries. It was only at that time that Catholics in China and in Taiwan were allowed to put the ancestor tablets and the ancestor altars in their homes.

#### 3.1.1 Anthropological Considerations of the Chinese Rites Controversy

The first consideration that comes out from the reading of the Chinese Rites Controversy historical background, is it seems to me the Chinese people had no chance to participate in this discussion. In other words, the "problem" with Chinese rites was only a problem of Western missionaries. A problem

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17. George Minamiki, *The Chinese rites controversy from its beginning to modern times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 197.

between the two souls of the Catholic Church, the one who wanted to acculturate to the new place and new environments, and the other, which argued that embracing a new religion means totally changing one's life<sup>18</sup>. Until Westerners raised the issue, the Chinese never saw the rites as contrary to their Christian faith. If not, they would have openly rejected the faith, and this has been the case in China, Japan, and elsewhere. The Chinese participated in the ancient rites because they were Chinese, and becoming Christians should not mean rejecting their Chineseness<sup>19</sup>.

As we saw, during this long history of more than 400 years the same question was continuously asked: are the rites in their essence civil and political, or are they religious? If they are civil and political, they are permissible, if they are religious, they are prohibited. Starting from this consideration, I try to offer one other point of view, based on my personal experience in Taiwan but also partially advanced by other scholars<sup>20</sup>.

It is my conviction that for western people the "Personal" dimension of religion became one foundation of the faith. This personal way to achieve the will or the union with God can also be found during the medieval period. Many religious orders, Benedictines, Cenobites, Cistercians, and Eremites – and particularly in the Anchorites in Africa – favor isolation from the world, because only by separating yourself from the outside and corrupt secular world, you can obtain salvation for your soul. This was, in most cases, the teaching of the Church until the Second Vatican Council.

Moreover, since Francis Bacon's famous aphorism "Knowledge is power" and Descartes's affirmation "Cogito Ergo Sum", the individual's primary activity is thinking. Great emphasis was placed on the rational thought processes, and the result of this is the refusal to bring together two different, and in this view conflicting, thought systems or ideologies.

According to Doumont<sup>21</sup>, since the time of Pope Gelasius (around A.D. 500), a clear division between the priests' *auctoritas* and the king's *potestas* started. In other words, the division was a distinction between the secular political power and the spiritual Church's authority. This conception also can be found in the works of many medieval philosophers and thinkers, like the Italian Dante Alighieri and his "Doctrine of Two Suns" explained in his book *De Monarchia*, written around 1308-1318s<sup>22</sup>. As consequence, in the Western worldview, there is a clear distinction between the religious and the secular. An ideology has to be either religious or secular, but not both.

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18. Motte, Joseph S.J., 天主教史.

19. Umberto Bresciani, "The Future of Christianity in China" [in en], *Quaderni del Centro Studi Asiatico* 1, no. 3 (2006): 109.

20. Chan, *Weaving a dream*; Luttio, "The Chinese Rites Controversy."

21. Louis Doumont, "A Modified View of our Origins: the Christian Beginnings of Modern Individualism," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, Steven Lukes, eds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1985), 93–122.

22. Dante Alighieri, *The De monarchia of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Aurelia Henry (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1904).



On the other hand, Chinese people particularly stressed the “communitarian”, the familial dimension (*jia-zu* 家族) of religious life. Communities are very much lay-oriented and have lay responsibilities; the familial community recognizes the important role of the women who are the transmitters of rituals and traditions within the inner, the *nei* 内 sphere of the family<sup>23</sup>. And the principal activity of this type of community is “doing”, not thinking. There are not as clear distinctions in the West between sacred and profane, also because these terms are unquestionably Western concepts, built in a particular cultural context, and in this way useless in order to describe and analyze other cultural situations.

Therefore, while the Western ceremonies and rites need particular places – as a Church (where in the silence you can feel the presence of God), and especially need silence and concentration – Chinese ceremonies need just a place, which of course can be the temple, but often can be a big tent placed on the road (*ban-zhuo* 辦桌 or *bán-dòu* in Taiwanese) or just the house. And the Chinese prerogative of these rites is the communitarian and, more important, familial way to celebrate them. During the Chinese New Year; there are no particular liturgies or complicated rituals to follow by people. Although People just have to worship their ancestors and the deities on the familial altar, then they can enjoy the family lunch, the most important thing is that all the family has to be together at this time in order to honor the ancestors and reinforce the social relations of the family.

## 3.2 Catholicism in Taiwan

The island of Taiwan has been part of a territorial jurisdiction since 1514, when it was included in the diocese of Funchal, the capital of the Madeira Islands of Portugal. As a missionary jurisdiction, there was some organized Catholic activity on the island. In 1576, the first Chinese diocese was established in Macao and covered most of mainland China and Taiwan. From the 16th century through the 19th century, this diocese was divided several times. In chronological order, Taiwan belonged to the dioceses of Nanjin (南京) on 1660, Fujian (福建) in 1696, and Amoy /Xiamen (廈門) in 1883<sup>24</sup>.

In 1913, the Apostolic Vicariate of the Island of Formosa (Taiwan) was established, being detached from the Diocese of Amoy. It was renamed Kaohsiung (高雄) in 1949. At the present time, the hierarchy consists of Taipei (台北) the Metropolitan Archdiocese since 1952, founded in 1949, Xinzhu (新竹) a Diocese founded in 1961 and Hualian (花蓮) founded a Diocese in 1963. Taizhong (台中) at the center of the island was founded as a diocese in 1962, on the southern part of the island there is Kaohsiung

23. Nicolas S.J. Standaert, “New Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in China,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (1997): 573–613.

24. Beatrice K. F. Leung, “The Introduction,” in *The Catholic Church in Taiwan: Birth, Growth and Development*, ed. Francis K.H. So, Beatrice K.F. Leung, and Ellen Mary Mylod, Christianity in Modern China (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 1–14.

(高雄) founded in 1913 and renamed and upgraded in 1949 and 1961, Jiayi (嘉義) diocese founded 1952 and Tainan (台南) founded in 1961<sup>25</sup>.

In September 1951 the Papal Internuncio to China was expelled to Hong Kong. Since 1952, the Papal Internuncio has been stationed in Taiwan. Also, the ROC ambassador to the Holy See has provided the only permanent diplomatic link between China and the Holy See. In 1971 Pope Paul VI, changed the status of the internuncio of Taiwan, declaring that the Vatican's representative is only a Charge d'Affaire<sup>26</sup>.

Analyzing the history of the Taiwanese Catholic Church, it is possible to divide it into four phases. The first Evangelization was under the Spanish occupation (1626-1642) until the destruction of the Catholic Church by the Dutch. The second Evangelization (1859-1895) was during the last years of the Manchu, and a third phase was under Japanese Rule (1895-1945). The fourth phase is from the end of WW2 until the present day.

### 3.2.1 The First Evangelization (1626-1642)

In 1624 The Audiencia of the Philippines sent a small expedition to Formosa. It was led by a Dominican, Fr. Bartolomeus Martinez. The ship was blown off course by a typhoon to Amoy (廈門), in Fujian, where it was repaired. The following year it departed from Amoy, and another typhoon propelled it to the shore of Formosa, to a place not far from Jilong (基隆). Martinez went ashore and investigated the region. He returned to Manila and communicated the information he gathered to Fernando de Silva, who in the meantime was appointed as Governor-General.

The next year de Silva sent a new expedition of 12 Chinese junks and 3 galleys to Formosa. On May 4, the flotilla landed at a cape, which was then called Gongliao (貢寮) and is now named Sandiaojiao (三貂角). The Spanish gave it the name San Diego or Santiago (Shanzhiyewo 山志耶我). From there they went northward up to the island of Tajilongyu (大雞籠嶼) which they called San Salvador (Shengsalumodou 聖撒律末都). Under the Japanese, its name was changed to Sheliaodao (社寮島), and now it is called Hepingdao (和平島)<sup>27</sup>. In San Salvador, the Spaniards built a church, which they consecrated to All the Saints (Todos los Santos). According to Chen<sup>28</sup>, here still exists an old wall on the grounds of the shipbuilding yard. In this first period, the Spanish missionaries built a second Church for the Chinese of Jilongxian (基隆縣), dedicating it to the Blessed Virgin. However, this

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25. GCatholic.org, *Catholic Church in Taiwan*, 2022, accessed March 9, 2022, <http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/country/TW.htm>.

26. Leung, "The Introduction."

27. Chen Jia-lu 陳嘉陸, *Tianzhujiao yibainian jianshi* 天主教一百年簡史 (Kaohsiung: Youying Press, 1960).

28. Chen Jia-lu 陳嘉陸.

Church was destroyed by a typhoon in 1630<sup>29</sup>. The same year a Dominican Brother salvaged the remaining material reused to build a small church for the aborigines in their village of Tapari (Tamoli 他墨里, Tamaoli 他毛里) in the north of Jinshan (金山).

Another Church was built in Danshui (淡水) in honor of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, in 1632, and another was built in Jinbaoli (金包里), a village in the North of Jilong. In 1634, following the Spanish colonization of the island, the Dominican priests arrived in Yilang (宜蘭), where they built the church of Saint Laurentius and, near the coast, a monastery for the Fathers and a provisional church. At Santiago (Sandiaojiao 三貂角), the Spanish had constructed a small fort. Not far from this fortification, one Dominican Father built a church and stayed there to announce the faith to the Aborigines. The church was dedicated to San Domingo<sup>30</sup>.

On April 2, 1633, Franciscans began coming to Taiwan. They stayed in Jilong and dedicated themselves to the work of the apostolate until they were able to sail to Japan. But a typhoon made them drift back to Taiwan, from where, in 1637, they departed for Japan once more. However, the foreign priests were persecuted in Japan, so they returned to Taiwan. One of them built a church with a monastery for the Franciscans, in order to do mission work there and to serve as a place of transit for China<sup>31</sup>.

In 1638, the Governor General of Manila wanted to unite all the Spanish forces, to battle against the Moros of Mindanao. Therefore, he called back the defense troops of Danshui and let the fort be demolished. As a consequence, the Spanish administration and the existence of the Catholic Church in Taiwan came into danger. First, the natives wanted to take possession of the fort. But their attack was beaten back by the remaining guard. For this reason, they took revenge on the four churches at the border of the Danshui River; and demolished each one. It became impossible for the priests to continue living there in peace, and finally, they moved to the churches in Eastern Taiwan. The Spaniards neglected the defense of Taiwan more and more. Moreover, the chapter of the Dominicans decided in 1638, to serve only the churches of Danshui and San Salvador (Hepingdao 和平島), because of the lack of missionaries. A year later, Jinbaoli (金包里) got a resident priest, while San Salvador was abandoned.

In 1641, San Domingo and Jinbaoli were the only places left with the Dominicans, while one Franciscan Father served Jilong (基隆)<sup>32</sup>. On August 3, 1642, Danshui was attacked by a Dutch force and captured on August 24, 1642. Then they proceeded to Jilong, killed the Franciscan Father, and burned his church and monastery to the ground. The Dominicans lost

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29. Study Note Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*, vol. 16 (Taipei: Published occasionally by the China Program of the CICM SM Province, 2004).

30. Verbiest.

31. Verbiest.

32. Verbiest.

all their possessions in Taiwan; and had been forced to leave their 4000 Christian converts on Formosa. Already based in Tainan since 1624, Dutch East India Company merchants used Taiwan as a colonial trading center for goods shipped between Asia and Europe, while missionaries actively converted aborigines to their Protestant faith near Tainan. The Dutch, including their missionaries, were themselves driven out of Taiwan in 1662 by the Chinese Ming Dynasty loyalist and General Zheng Chenggong, who brought his forces to Taiwan during his war of resistance against the Manchu<sup>33</sup>.

### 3.2.2 The Second Evangelization (1859-1895)

According to historians, in this period there were indescribable difficulties against which the Dominicans had to battle during the Manchu government. These difficulties were the greatest obstacle to the mission's progress. The missionaries had little defense. They were too far removed from Beijing, and being Spaniards, they did not like to call on the help of France, which had done a lot for the foundation of the Catholic Church in China. However, They called upon the Spanish consul of Amoy, which was of some help<sup>34</sup>.

Of course, this situation was a consequence created by the war between China and European countries. In fact, since that time, the Chinese government and Chinese people considered Christianity as a foreign religion, imported by colonial powers through war and weapons.

Since 1706, the 45th year of Kangxi 康熙, Catholicism was no longer allowed in Taiwan, and not a single missionary had been stationed there. But in the second half of the 19th century, the mission of China underwent a great revolution. As a consequence of the struggle between China and European powers for the opening up of the country, the Treaty of Tianjin (天津) was concluded between France and China. According to Article 13 of this treaty, the Government of China granted permission to the Catholic missionaries to establish them on the island, and to preach and confess the Catholic religion there; and to the Chinese people, the freedom was given to make this religion their own<sup>35</sup>. Just as in continental China, several harbors in Taiwan were opened up for commerce with foreign countries: Dagou (打狗), Anping (安平), Danshui (淡水), and Jilong (基隆) became open for commerce abroad<sup>36</sup>. When informed of these actions, the Roman Catholic Church body the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith immediately notified the Rev. Fr. Antonio Orge OP, Superior General of the Spanish Dominicans, and authorized him to let the Province of the Holy Rosary undertake the restoration of the Formosa mission. Father Orge sent word to

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33. Government Information Office Republic of China, *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*, 1st edition (Taipei: the Government Information Office, 2006).

34. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

35. Treaties of Tianjin, 1858, *Tianjin – France | china's external relations – a history*, March 2016, accessed March 9, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160305022918/http://www.chinaforeignrelations.net/node/162>.

36. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

Manila and, in a few weeks, Fr. Fernando Sainz was on his way to Formosa. Father Sainz left Manila in January 25 1859, and proceeded to Fujian where Fr. Angel Bofurull, a missionary in Amoy, was waiting to accompany him to Formosa<sup>37</sup>. With three Chinese catechists, the two priests set sail for the island and, on May 18, 1859, they reached the port of Dagou (打狗 known nowadays as Kaohsiung 高雄). The two rented a house near the port and on the evening of May 22, they took over. They encountered a lot of problems with the local population; the two missionaries were held prisoner by the Mandarin of Pitao (today Fengshan 鳳山) and luckily were liberated by an Englishman opium trader.

Father Sainz wrote afterward: “After the humiliations, we endured at the hands of the Mandarins, and after accepting their false promises, we boarded the ship of the opium vendor who had saved us. We had to do this because my companion, Father Angel, had been totally unnerved by the ordeal we had gone through. He was really ill, so I decided to get him to return to Amoy. He left on June 7, and I was alone in Formosa”<sup>38</sup>.

In Formosa, Father Sainz, alone and continuously in trouble, founded 1859 the first church in Qianjin (前金) dedicated to Our Lady of The Rosary. This provisional building had to be replaced by a new church in 1860<sup>39</sup>. In 1860 other missionaries came from the Philippines and in 1863 a church was founded in Wanjin (萬金)<sup>40</sup>.

In 1868 Fr. Sainz bought a piece of land in Tainan (台南), at that time the capital of Formosa, outside the city, and constructed there a house and a small temporary church. The people burned it down. Then the English immigrants in Tainan too became sick and tired of the persecution of the mandarins. The vice-consul of France, S. Gibson, protested to the Daotai (道台), the superior authority in Formosa, in Tainan. An English ship bombarded Tainan, until the Daotai asked for peace. He was punished 40,000 ounces of silver, of which 2,000 ounces was for the Catholic Church, for the burning of the three churches mentioned above<sup>41</sup>.

After the intervention of the French vice-consul, the missionaries were directed to settle in Tainan. Father Sainz took advantage of this and sent two of his missionaries to the north to see about reviving the once-flourishing Catholic mission there. These two settled in Jilong and stayed there for a year. But the natives proved unresponsive to their teachings, and the two disappointed missionaries had no choice but to leave the place.

Sadly, they realized that the time had not yet come wherein the old mission of Jilong could be restored. Canadian Presbyterians had, already from 1863, settled in Taipei. They had many students. In 1883, a controversy

37. Chen Jia-lu 陳嘉陸, *Tianzhujiao yibainian jianshi* 天主教一百年簡史.

38. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

39. Verbiest.

40. Chen, I-Chun 陳怡君, “宗教經驗的召喚與祖先記憶的重塑：屏東萬金天主教徒的記憶、儀式與認同” [in zh] (PhD Thesis, 國立臺灣大學, January 2011).

41. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

arose among them, and a part of the Presbyterians left their denomination and went to the South. When they came to the Catholic mission, they asked the Catholic missionaries whether they wanted to go to Taipei<sup>42</sup>.

One priest went and settled in the North-West of Taipei, in a place called Heshangzhou (和尚州). Difficulties with the Presbyterians were bound to come, and they soon did. But the missionary stood his ground; he came to the mission to have a look himself. He was welcomed with a great show by the Christians. New resistance came from the Presbyterians and from the Mandarins. The latter declared the contract of the sale of Heshangzhou invalid and forbade anyone to sell the ground to the Catholic Church. The Presbyterians came to Heshangzhou, to attack the Catholic Church in conferences, insult the Immaculate Virgin, etc. In June 1888, Fr. Arranz bought a piece of land with a building on it: a house of four rooms, which was used as a temporary church and residence<sup>43</sup>. At the same time, he started to evangelize the places around Taipei, founded a church in Dadaocheng (大稻埕), and rented a house in the city of Taipei (sited in Taiping street 太平街), but the place was not suitable, and the work stopped there. Also, the mission of Danshui (淡水) was met with hostility from the Presbyterians, and so was abandoned. Mission stations were founded in Nuannuan (暖暖) and Xinghuadian (興化店).

### 3.2.3 The Third Period (1895-1945)

Although the freedom of the missions under the Japanese regime was in a certain sense impeded, the brutalities, plundering, murders, and arsons, of which the Church had been so many times the victim under the Manchus, became a thing of the past. The Catholic Church could take deeper root. Although the missionaries had to abandon a few smaller stations, a lot of new ones came into being. It was under this regime that the mission of Taiwan was elevated to Apostolic Prefecture, on July 19, 1913, with Clemente Fernandez as Prefect Apostolic<sup>44</sup>.

The Japanese favored the immigration of Japanese to Taiwan, who settled there in great numbers. Among them were a number of Catholics, and it became a great problem how to take pastoral care of them. It was difficult for these people to pray in one church together with the Chinese because the latter were used to singing their prayers out loud. For this reason, these Japanese Christians were neglected during the first years of the occupation<sup>45</sup>. Under Japanese domination, a church was founded in Taipei for Japanese Christians, in 1926. In 1940, there were 200 Japanese Catholics in Taipei. The Dominican Fathers started to expand their missionary work

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42. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

43. Verbiest.

44. Acta Apostolicae Sedis, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis 1913-12-20: Vol 5 Iss 18* [in English], vol. 5 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1913), 366–367, accessed March 8, 2022, [http://archive.org/details/sim\\_acta-apostolicae-sedis\\_1913-12-20\\_5\\_18](http://archive.org/details/sim_acta-apostolicae-sedis_1913-12-20_5_18).

45. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

in northern Taiwan, building the church in a place called Xindianwei (新店尾). After the erection of the Prefecture Apostolic Church, the bishop at the time chose the church as his residence and cathedral.

In 1940 his parish had 600 Christians (now, after being rebuilt, this church is in Minshenglu 民生東路). At that time, the parish had two outside mission stations: Heshangzhou and Shiding (石碇), and a catechumenate in Xindian (新店). The missionaries built a church in Jilong, but the place was a military base, and that fact caused additional difficulties for the Catholic Church. Although the priest did his utmost to punctually follow the precepts of the Japanese, the military staff kept a severe check on every move and activity of the people, especially of the Catholics; the latter never got the sympathy of the military caste. For a long time, the Dominicans had been looking for an opportunity to found a mission in Xinzhu (新竹). However, it was extremely difficult to purchase a bit of land. Only in 1938 were they able to acquire sufficient land with a house to serve, for the time being, as church and residence. But WW2 prevented all further development<sup>46</sup>. In the 1920s, the Dominicans had decided to start a mission in Jiayi (嘉義), at first renting a house in the city and sending a catechist there. In 1934 Jiayi got a new church with a catechumenate. By 1941 there were 19 missionaries in Taiwan<sup>47</sup>. The war in 1941-1945 was a real disaster for the Church in Taiwan.

During World War II, the Japanese colonial government put Western Catholic missionaries under strict surveillance and forbade missionary work among the local people. The missionaries of Kaohsiung and Jilong, two Japanese military bases, were forced to leave the cities (Taiwan Yearbook 2006). Former Prefect Apostolic, Monsignor De la Hoz was replaced as Prefect Apostolic by a Japanese priest, Monsignor. Joseph Satowaki. On October 17, 1944, the Americans started bombing Taiwan. On May 31, 1945, the beautiful church that was erected in Taipei crumbled under the bombings, and the adjoining seminary and the residence of the missionary were severely damaged. Likewise, in Tainan, some mission property was destroyed. On September 2, 1945, Japan formally surrendered and the Japanese had to leave Taiwan, Msgr. Satowaki among them<sup>48</sup>.

### 3.2.4 The Fourth Period

In 1945 Msgr. Satowaki had to leave Taiwan, and a new Prefect Apostolic had to be designated, at that time the whole island had 18 priests, 6 sisters, and 10,000 Christians. On March 5, 1948, the Prefect Apostolic changed

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46. Verbiest.

47. Verbiest.

48. Verbiest.

again, that year Taiwan still had 14 Dominican Friars, 4 native priests, and 10 sisters, with 13,000 Christians<sup>49</sup>.

The arrival of the troops of General Chiang Kai-shek (蔣中正), and the numerous refugees from the Mainland, made for a huge problem for the Prefect Apostolic. Nearly all of these people spoke the Chinese of North China. They did not know the Taiwanese language, while, at that time, all the missionaries in Taiwan spoke only Taiwanese. Among the Chinese refugees, there were 3,000 Christians. The solution came with the problem, because among the Mainland Chinese, there were Chinese priests.

Although many missionaries had left Mainland China by 1949, they did not dare to establish their missions in Taiwan; because they were not yet sure that the U.S.A. would defend the island in case the Communist Mainland Chinese attacked. Nevertheless, in June 1950, there were already 45 missionaries and a hundred sisters in Taiwan<sup>50</sup>.

With the expulsion of all the foreign missionaries from China in 1950, Chinese priests and a few Chinese bishops escaped the persecution. Since so many people fled from the Communists in Mainland China many Congregations also came, and they started hospitals, schools, churches dispensaries, etc. Missionaries from China already knew Mandarin Chinese and were used to the Chinese lifestyle. Nevertheless, note that because so many people came from China at that time, one of the things that attracted many of them including those from Taiwan to go to Church was the Roman Catholic Charity Caritas help coming from the USA and distributed through the churches. At that time the people were so poor, they approached the church, not just to know the faith and churches became full. Many of the conversions were made without knowing almost anything about the faith, but there were so many who desired to be baptized each year.

In addition, the Church officials were very involved in politics. The bishops were with the Kuomintang government, and because of that, the Church received many privileges from the government<sup>51</sup>. According to a 1956 statistic, there were in Taiwan 306 foreign priests and 95 Chinese priests. Churches were built not only in the big cities but also in more important villages. Especially from 1955 to 1959, the number of followers increased from 48,000 to 182,000 people. In 1959 there were in Taiwan more than 300,000 Catholic Christians; one-third of them were aboriginal people or Chinese from the Mainland<sup>52</sup>.

Taiwan was divided into two Church Prefectures on January 13, 1950, Msgr. Jose Arregui, became Prefect of Kaohsiung and Rev. Joseph Kuo was appointed Prefect of Taipei. The Taizhong Prefecture was established on October 6, 1950, and the American Rev. Willian F. Kupfer was appointed as its first Prefect on January 26, 1952. The Jiayi and Hualian Prefectures were

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49. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626-1965*.

50. Verbiest.

51. Government Information Office Republic of China, *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*.

52. Motte, Joseph S.J., 天主教史.



established on August 7, 1952, and Msgr. Thomas Niu and Msgr. Andrew J. Verineux, M.E.P., were appointed Administrators respectively. On this same date, Taiwan became the 21st Chinese Ecclesiastical Province and Taipei an Archdiocese, with Msgr. Joseph Kuo (郭若石) as its Archbishop, being consecrated on October 26, 1952. When he resigned from this office on December 19, 1959, he was succeeded by Cardinal Tien Kengsin (田耕莘) as Administrator.

Soon afterward, seven dioceses were formed: the Taipei archdiocese, and the Xinzhu, Taizhong, Jiayi, Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Hualian dioceses. The Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference, the highest managing body of Catholic affairs in Taiwan, was established in Taipei in 1967. The conference is currently composed of seven incumbent bishops and is presided over by Archbishop Joseph Cheng (鄭再發), of the Archdiocese of Taipei. As of March 2006, there were 15 bishops, 726 priests, and 1,067 nuns serving 300,000 Catholics in Taiwan<sup>53</sup>. According to Cardinal Shan (interview for Fides)<sup>54</sup> "in Taiwan today we have over 600 priests, but 400 are elderly, and only a little more than 100 are under 60 years old."

It is interesting to note that only after the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) was the use of the Chinese language adopted for the Mass: According to the Council document *Sacrosantum Concilium* (solemnly promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963):

1. Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.
2. But since the use of the native mother tongue of other countries, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.
3. These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.
4. Translations from the Latin text into the native mother tongue of other countries intended for use in the liturgy must

53. Government Information Office Republic of China, *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*.

54. W. Meldrum, *A Cardinal Comes of Age* [in en], website, September 2005, accessed March 9, 2022, <https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=20&post=24892>.

be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above<sup>55</sup>.

The same document also discusses the Catholic Church acculturation challenge:

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which are not contrary to the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does Mother Church respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit<sup>56</sup>

Prompted by these declarations, the Holy Mass was celebrated in Chinese. The first Chinese Mass was celebrated by Msgr. Yu Ping during the Christmas period. The people answered in Chinese to the prayers and sang harmoniously in their own language<sup>57</sup>. After the Second Vatican Council declarations, Taiwanese people were also allowed to have in their homes the ancestor's altar with the ancestor's tablets.

### 3.3 Some Anthropological Considerations

The first consideration that arises from the reading of the history of the Taiwanese Catholic Church, is that before 1949 just a few missionaries were sent to Taiwan. Therefore, the evangelization of Taiwan was concentrated mostly on the aboriginal people, due to the difficulty for Spaniard missionaries to enter Chinese society<sup>58</sup>. Only after 1949, when many Christians from Mainland China came to Taiwan, and many people, as we saw above, received baptism in order to receive the Caritas' food aid sent by the USA. During my fieldwork, I met a lot of Catholics who admitted that "I grew up eating the priest's flour and drinking priest's milk powder" (*wo shi chi shen-fu de mian-fen, he shen-fu de niunai-fen zhangdale* 我是吃神父的麵粉,喝神父的牛奶粉長大了). But aside from the food, other initiatives attracted Taiwanese people toward the Catholic religion. As Cardinal Shan – the Cardinal of Kaohsiung at the time of my fieldwork – spoke in one interview

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55. Second Vatican Council Fathers, "Sacrosanctum concilium," in *Documents of the II Vatican Council*. (Vatican City: LEV, 1963).

56. Second Vatican Council Fathers.

57. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

58. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*; Government Information Office Republic of China, *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*.

for the Catholic magazine *Fides*<sup>59</sup>, “The Island in the 1950s lacked education and medical facilities, so the Church responded by concentrating its efforts there. We established many schools—three universities, 27 high schools and 10 professional schools, 10 elementary schools,” Shan says. “Altogether we have more than 50 schools in Taiwan”.

Doing my fieldwork, I also discovered that at that time, many families were baptized, or let their children be baptized, because according to them “in this way the children can for free go to a Catholic school”. Children were invited to take catechism classes. After every class, the priest put a stamp in their exercise book; with three stamps children could have a sack of flour.

According to Gramsci<sup>60</sup> the supremacy of one social group, is expressed in two ways: as domination (*Coazione*) and as “intellectual and moral direction” (*Consenso*). Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is opposed, in the Prison Notebooks, to the idea of domination. Hegemony is established by a complex system of relationships and mediation. Hegemony is, in other words, an accomplished capacity of leading. In accordance with Gramsci’s words, it is my deep conviction that the Catholic Church in Taiwan has never been a hegemonic power. Different from other places, Catholicism in Taiwan did not rely on foreign countries’ power to enter the island. As a consequence, we cannot historically compare the situation of the Taiwanese Catholic Church with the situations of other places where Christianity entered with the help of a colonialist power (as in Latin America, the Philippines, some African countries, and China after the Opium Wars).

If we analyze the first arrival in Taiwan supported by Spaniard soldiers, we can see that the first missionaries’ evangelization was directed to aboriginal people and a group of Chinese from Luzon, who had infringed the Spanish laws in the Philippines<sup>61</sup>. According to the Verbist Study Note<sup>62</sup>, Cheng perhaps means the revolt of the Chinese in Manila in 1603.

When the Spaniard’s soldiers left Taiwan, the missionaries’ activities had undergone a brusque retrenchment, until their expulsion by the Dutch. But the Catholic missionaries’ time in Taiwan was really too short to establish deep roots. So, in my view, we cannot speak about Church domination or Church power. Also in the 19th century, the French consul intervened by bombarding Tainan. It was to help the English immigrants who lived there (Verbist Study Note 2004); the scope of France consul was to help the opium traders, not to help the missionaries work. Similarly, someone could argue that the same kind of “constriction” had been effectually used by the Church after WW2, with the American Caritas aid<sup>63</sup>. Material goods have become a way to invite people to embrace the Catholic faith. But if we analyze this

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59. Meldrum, *A Cardinal Comes of Age*.

60. Gramsci, Gerratana, and Istituto Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*.

61. Chen Jia-lu 陳嘉陸, *Tianzhujiao yibainian jianshi* 天主教一百年簡史.

62. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

63. *Caritas Internationalis* is a confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organizations operating in over 200 countries and territories worldwide.

historical event, we can say that in the period between the 1950 and the 1960 – although the Church was really in a “gold period”<sup>64</sup> – the number of Catholic believers in relation to Taiwan’s population was a small percentage. According to a 1966 statistic, the Catholic Church counted 265,564 baptized and 46,672 catechumens, while there were more than 12,000,000 inhabitants in Taiwan<sup>65</sup>.

The reactions of Taiwanese society, in particular the temples shamans, (the *Dáng-Kì*, *Ji-tong* 乩童 in Chinese) to this process of evangelization, should also be taken into consideration. During my fieldwork, some believers told me that when they started to attend catechism class, their parents, probably “educated” by the various *Dáng-Kì*, started to complain, claiming that if they became Catholic, they could not return to their home after death, because the priest would have taken away the heart from their body in order to produce aspirins<sup>66</sup>.

Another Catholic told me that his parents had told him that the priest wants to baptize him with the intention to take away his soul. His parents believed that the souls of Taiwanese Catholics were carried to the USA, where they would have to work in order to produce nylon clothes.

Another case that I had gathered during my fieldwork was about a family that had received baptism in order to receive the American’s Caritas aid. All the members of the family have become Catholic, with the exception of the first son, who still takes care of the ancestors’ tablets.

One woman told me that in order to more easily obtain the Caritas aid, the father was baptized, but she and her sisters were not because her mother was persuaded that a Catholic woman could not easily get married.

These examples show a clear and concrete opposition to the process of evangelization, one active opposition made by the *Dáng-Kì*, and one symbolic opposition made by the Taiwanese cultural environment.

It is therefore possible to say that the Catholic Church in Taiwan had never been a hegemonic power, as in Europe. The Church entered Taiwan because it had been expelled from another place, so the Catholic Church arrived here without structures, without clear plans of evangelization. The Western way of thinking, the Cartesian one, which many times has been the platform for the evangelization experience, was never the dominant “discourse” in Taiwan, and thus never become hegemonic. Accordingly, it seems inappropriate to me to analyze the encounter between the Catholic Church and the Taiwanese population in terms of secular power, as proposed by

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64. Motte, Joseph S.J., 天主教史.

65. Verbiest, *Special Issue on the Catholic Church in Taiwan: 1626–1965*.

66. Traditionally, the corpse at the time of death was to be placed whole, without any missing parts, in the main hall of the house. There, the body of the corpse was carefully prepared, made up, and dressed before being placed on a carpet. After that, a yellow cloth covered the face while a blue one covered the body. The meaning of the story told by the *Dáng-Kì* is that if the priest takes the heart of the deceased, his body will no longer be complete, so this will be a “bad death” and the soul of the deceased will turn into a ghost.

Asad<sup>67</sup>. The Catholic Church never became a source of secular or political power in Taiwan.

From another point of view, knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church in Taiwan seems necessary. As previously pointed out, the evangelization process in Taiwan at least until 1949, was linked only with the Dominican Order. This is very important because according to the history of the Chinese Rites Controversy, the Dominicans were totally against the ancestors' cult, considering the Taiwanese popular religion gods as idols of the pagan religion, decried by the Bible, or similar to the pantheon's divinity of ancient Greece and Rome.

This concept leads people to see "the other" as a foreign enemy or as a pagan heresy, deeply influenced the relationships between the two cultural systems, and created a dialogue based on preconceptions, misconceptions, misunderstanding, and mutual mistrust. This kind of dialogue is still present in modern Taiwanese society, and knowledge of historical background can help us to see these phenomena in a new light. For Taiwanese people who now live in the twenty-first century, Christianity is a religion made by foreigners and headed by foreigners. I met many youth people who started to develop some interest in the Catholic religion, but as one of them told me "my father doesn't agree because he told me that this is a foreigner thing that does not have any relationships with us [Taiwanese people]".

In the same way, it is not uncommon to find priests or other religious leaders who still complain about the "Taiwanese Idols" and about their believers who attend the rites of the Church even though they still go to the temple. Western missionaries (and, for that matter, Western-educated Chinese clergymen) viewed the pantheon of the popular Chinese religion as if it was the pagan religion of ancient Greece and Rome, or the religion of the heathen Canaanites described by the Biblical prophets<sup>68</sup>. It appears clear that both these ways to consider the other are full of bias and are intrinsically linked with a judgment value.

My point is that these phenomena must be put within a cultural context, but remember that this cultural context was made by a historical process that comprehends these kinds of preconceptions, misunderstanding and mutual mistrust. Only with a deep knowledge of the historical process, it is possible to understand and translate the symbols which embodied the religious practices and the everyday life of people.

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67. Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," *Man* 18, no. 2 (1983): 237-259.

68. Bresciani, "The Future of Christianity in China," 109.