

Bary's criteria of late-Ming orthodoxy, argues that though Yang rejected the Cheng-Zhu interpretation of Confucianism and was a religious syncretist (first Buddhist-Confucian then Christian-Confucian), his views were still within the bounds of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Moreover, his Christian-Confucian synthesis was an example of the successful "inculturation" of Christian theology, practice, and fellowship in the Chinese context. In reaching such a conclusion, Standaert places his study in opposition to Jacques Gernet's *Chine et christianisme. Action et réaction* (Paris, 1982; cf. the review in *Monumenta Serica* XXXV

[1981–1983], pp. 669–671), which concluded that insurmountable cultural barriers prevented Chinese like Yang Tingyun from apprehending the Christian faith.

If one can overlook the numerous typographical errors, the change in the author's numerical and alphabetical outlining system midway through the work, and the inefficient first section, one will be rewarded by this thoroughly-researched and thoughtful study of the encounter of Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism in the life and thought of Yang Tingyun.

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ISO KERN: *Buddhistische Kritik am Christentum im China des 17. Jahrhunderts. Texte von Yu Shunxi (?–1621), Zhuhong (1535–1615), Yuanwu (1566–1642), Tongrong (1593–1679), Xingyuan (1611–1662), Zhixu (1599–1655)*. Schweizer Asiatische Studien, Monographien 11. Bern/Frankfurt a.M./New York/Paris/Wien: Peter Lang, 1992. 418 pp. DM 101.– (PB).

The topic of Buddhist-Christian encounter as well as the reaction of China to the introduction of Christianity has attracted a lot of interest during the last years. Often the discussion on the latter had been charged with polemics (see, e.g., J. Gernet's book *Chine et christianisme. Action et réaction* [Paris 1982]) whereas the reflections on the former tended to be more philosophical and produced theological debates (as, e.g., H. Waldenfels, *Absolutes Nichts. Zur Grundlegung des Dialogs zwischen Buddhismus und Christentum* [Freiburg 1976]).

Kern's study is a contribution to both fields, grounded in a concrete setting (South China in the early 17th century) and starting from the translation of anti-Christian apologetic literature, written by Buddhists. The author, well versed in western philosophy

and theology, has worked mainly on phenomenology, studied also Chinese philosophy in Europe as well as in Taiwan and Mainland China and now teaches in Switzerland. In his latest book, Kern tries to give a sympathetic survey on the points of understanding and misunderstanding between the early Jesuits and their Buddhist counterparts. He has chosen the main apologetic texts as starting point for an analysis of the Buddhist understanding and questioning of Christianity as they knew it through the Chinese works of the Jesuits, mainly M. Ricci. The texts Kern chose are – as far as I could check – the most representative ones, taken out of three apologetic collections of the late Ming. The texts are written almost exclusively by monks, not confined to an only superficial level of attack and slander but leading directly to funda-

mental problems between the two systems of belief.

First, Kern gives a general introduction, dividing the Buddhist critique into three phases: (1) 1608–1615: Texts by Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 and his followers. The critique is still cautious but already pointing to fundamental differences. Still this led to a persecution of the Christians in 1616/1617. The Christian challenge to the Buddhists instigating their criticism is scarcely mentioned. One should refer therefore to Kern's article on Ricci's attitude toward Buddhism in *Monumenta Serica* XXXVI (1984–1985), pp. 65–126. (2) 1635/1636: In the meantime the Christians had attacked Buddhism. Now, again initiated by a lay Buddhist, the counterattack became more vehement, leaving the inclusive approach behind and focusing on the differences. Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 and his disciples are cited. (3) 1642/1643: With Ouyi Zhixu 滿益知旭, Confucian arguments are integrated into the debate pointing also to the "political danger" of Christianity. (Phases 2 and 3 could be also considered as one.)

The introduction is followed by the translations according to the above defined phases, with biographical information on the author and a characterization of the criticism. But for the first two translations, where some parts are given in a somewhat obscure rendering (see pp. 24 and 60), the translations are very faithful and readable. Since the Chinese texts are given in the annex, they can easily be checked. (This is all the more laudable since these apologetic collections are generally not easily accessible. Maybe due to the original some of the reproduced pages make a hard reading.)

The Buddhist attack was, in fact, a counterattack, since the Christians had started the polemic. As Kern shows, the Buddhist monks were reluctant to enter the discussion

and were virtually instigated by lay followers to react, since they saw a danger in Christianity to Buddhist morals (e.g., the problem of vegetarianism) and Chinese politics. The Jesuits, used to philosophical debate proving the supreme truth of Christianity, met with a mentality rather oriented toward inclusion and syncretism which had already arranged itself with Daoism and Confucianism. The premisses both sides started from were very different: on the one hand a belief in human rationality which can verify to a great extent the truth given by revelation, on the other hand a scepticism towards words and definitions. The monks arguing with the Christians were adherents of Chan 禪, often with a strong devotional inclination, philosophically drawing on Huayan 華嚴 and Tiantai 天台. The methods of Buddhist logic and argumentation were no longer in use. The only exception was Feiyin Tongrong 費隱通容, whose apparent difficulty in using Buddhist logic asserts this disuse even the more (see p. 155).

Language proved to be a source of misunderstanding more than understanding, since the Christians used a Chinese vocabulary but interpreted it differently. Therefore, at first Christianity seemed to be quite similar to Buddhism, so that the Buddhists could understand it in a sympathetic way as "half-Buddhist." When the antagonism grew they turned the same fact the other way around and accused the Christians of plagiarizing Buddhism. Most of the criticism started from language, especially from terms like *tian* 天 (heaven/god), trying to clarify the different understandings. Nevertheless the discussion was not restricted to terminology but aimed at the level of meaning. *Tianzhu* 天主, for instance, was a Buddhist term used for a certain category of *devas* so that a Buddhist reader of Christian texts who came across this term – which the Christians used

for "God" – might at first understand it the traditional way, claiming that the Christian God was only a minor deity in the Buddhist pantheon. This fact is well known but in the texts translated by Kern it becomes clear that the Buddhists sensed nevertheless that the Christian *tianzhu* was – in spite of the term – the absolute, the highest goal, the creator (a notion they rejected), the unexplicable transcendence. Here lies the difference to Gernet's argument since language (and different intellectual and religious traditions) are not insurmountable barriers. Just to the contrary, I would say that open-minded and religious people notwithstanding their own heritage of religious terminology and formed concepts are especially capable of transcending language barriers since to them the problem is not a mere intellectual one. Rather they want to get to the essentials, to the level of experience, and there the dialogue must start.

The problem of dialogue is the question behind apologetics. Kern does not give further information on the development of Buddhist-Christian dialogue but compared with what we usually read on apologetics, the texts presented by Kern show an honest and substantial reaction of the late Ming Buddhists to Christianity, not mere hatred and defence of endangered privileges. The central theme of Buddhist questioning is the Christian notion of "God" as "the other," the unreachable, the creator and redeemer who is in eternity a "Thou," whereas the Buddhists claim this to be mere illusion. For them the only reality is the "Buddha-nature" in everyone and everything (p. 292). They cannot accept a special role of man as the "crown of creation" (cf. the problem of killing animals) but challenge every form of dualism. Whether the problem of an individual soul or the notion of "God" as opposite to "man," the point is, in my opinion, the diffi-

culty to understand what the notion of "person" means to Christians since it was so alien to the Chinese. Up to this day, here lies an important challenge for dialogue.

Interestingly, the concrete and historical person of Jesus Christ does scarcely occur in the texts. This may not be due only to the Buddhists who might have seen him as not as central as the idea of "God" (and maybe more like an *avatar*) but also to the presentation of Christianity by the Jesuits. The reader of Kern's book should therefore be informed about what was known in China of Christianity at that time for evaluating the Buddhist response. (Kern should have given more about that in the introduction.) So it is quite natural that the problem of resurrection, which was a central topic in Central Asia, does not occur (p. 290). The Buddhists were interested in the questions of the absolute, the way to salvation, and therefore also in morality whereas miraculous events, etc., did not pose any problems. The Christians saw in the Buddhist equation of heart and Buddha-nature the greatest hybris of man: to challenge the superiority of God (because of which mankind had fallen from the state of paradise) and therefore they thought they had to attack Buddhism.

Kern reflects on these topics at the end of the book, hinting – as is always done – to the mystical tradition of Christianity which acknowledges God "within us" (pp. 293, 295). He distinguishes between the conceptual and the deeper level, pleading for an exchange of experience. In a cautious way he poses the question whether there might not be more room for a dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism when transcending the absoluteness of dogmatic speech which was suspect to the Ming Buddhists anyway. In general I think his approach to be helpful if one keeps in mind that the "word" has a different position and function in both religions.

(A first step to explore this field has been made by Michael Fuss, *Buddhavacana and Dei Verbum* [Leiden 1991], from the viewpoint of scriptural inspiration.) Buddhism is oriented towards experience, and especially Chinese Buddhism with its idea of inherent Buddha-nature can more easily assign to words an only relative value. In Christianity the "first fact" is given: revelation. Christ is "the word" which cannot be interpreted *ad libitum*. Dogmatic speech is (or should be) an outflow of experience in accordance with reflections on this given fact.

Conceptualization may often be a hindrance and it might be supposed that Christianity would have another face today – at least to a certain extent – had it not developed where it did, since language uses the words given by the existing surrounding culture. Still, one should not totally separate form and content, experience and verbalization. (By the way, there were also a good deal of dogmatic debates between Buddhists about "correct" formulations.) Pointing only to the mystical aspect of Christianity would reduce it and in fact often tends to be one-sided. A fruitful dialogue must comprise all of both religions, probing them to their depths without exempting anything of their *proprium*.

Since Kern's bibliography does only comprise books and articles directly concerned with his subject, it might be interesting to have a quick look on the whole problem from a broader perspective. Kern intends to correct the challenging view of Gernet who denied any possibility of understanding between Christianity and Chinese culture, citing with enthusiasm whoever was against the introduction of this "western" religion (Gernet's book has received different evaluations. To name just a few: Paul Cohen in *HJAS* 47,2 [1987], pp. 674–683; Howard Goodman/Anthony Grafton, "Ricci, the

Chinese, and the Toolkits of Textualists," in *Asia Major* III,2 [1990], pp. 95–148; and Julia Ching in *Monumenta Serica* XXXV [1981–1983], pp. 669–671). Kern criticizes that Gernet did not specify his witnesses who were sometimes Buddhists, and gives the impression that theirs had been the reaction of the whole educated class in China to Christian mission (p. 45). Seen as a Buddhist reaction to Christianity, one might ask how defenders of Buddhism, a religion that also originated in an Indo-European context, could stand for an incompatibility of Chinese thought with this new "western" religion if one follows Gernet's linguistic determinism (p. 46, footnote). From this point of view Kern's book with its presentation of texts counterbalances much of the polemics going on about the mission in China from the early Jesuits up to this day.

As a parallel one might also have a look on Japanese anti-Christian apologetics. (The most famous texts of the 17th century are translated by George Elison: *Deus Destroyed. The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* [Cambridge 1973].) Criticism came from different sides, including the Buddhist one. Chinese Christian works were known in Japan but mainly among the Confucianists. (See Joseph Jennes: *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan* [Tokyo 1973], pp. 185ff.) I could not find direct evidence of a transmission of Ming Buddhist critique to Japan in the early days, but Notto R. Thelle, in his *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854–1899* (Honolulu 1987), shows that in the middle of the 19th century collections of Ming Buddhist anti-Christian polemics were reprinted in Japan (Thelle, pp. 27, 268) as a basis for new attacks. The texts presented by Kern had therefore a far-reaching impact on the relations between Buddhists and Christians in the East.

In China Buddhist-Christian apologetics were revived during the 19th century with the arrival of foreign missionaries, now including the Protestants. (For these see W. Glüer: "The Encounter between Christianity and Chinese Buddhism during the Nineteenth Century and the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in *Ching Feng* 11,3 [1968], pp. 39–57.) One of them, Joseph Edkins, wrote a book about the "errors of Buddhism" (*Shijiao zhengmiu* 釋教正謬, [Shanghai 1857]), which Thelle calls "the only Christian treatise that in this period introduced a substantial criticism of Buddhism" (Thelle, pp. 28, 33, 269, 270–271). Even though he was a critic, Edkins studied Buddhism. Another interesting encounter on a more practical level was the Lutheran Karl L. Reichelt's "Mission to the Buddhists" and his contacts with the Buddhist reformer Taixu 太虛 during the 1920s. Reichelt wrote on Buddhism as well and tried to integrate Buddhist elements. Timothy Richard had undertaken a translation of an important Buddhist treatise, the *Dasheng qixinlun* 大乘起信論, together with Yang Wenhui 楊文會, a lay Buddhist and "father of the Buddhist revival," interpreting it in a Christian way.

Viewing the contemporary relation between both religions in China one can attest a stagnation, especially if seen against the background of Japanese developments. Buddhist-Christian dialogue hardly exists in China. There are, of course, some attempts to cooperate on an organizational level, but a lot of fear exists, in particular on the Buddhist side, to get into closer contact. Take, for example, one of the most prominent and individualistic Chinese monks, Yinshun 印順, now living in Taiwan. In 1965, there were published his disputes with a Chinese Christian pastor named Wu Enpu 吳恩溥: *Lun shangdi ai shiren* 論上帝愛世人 (Taipei)

which are polemics at best. In spite of all the information available today there seems to be no substantial progress in mutual understanding compared to Ming times. On the contrary, mutual accusations took the place of spiritual searching. Of course there are different reasons why this came to be so which cannot be discussed here. But just because of this situation Kern's book may help to direct the view straight to the fundamental questions between both religions. Starting from this presentation of texts written by certain Buddhists in a certain cultural and historical setting there is a concrete basis on which further studies can build and, hopefully, understanding can replace mere comparison. (See the title of John May's article: "Vom Vergleich zur Verständigung. Die unstete Geschichte der Vergleiche zwischen Buddhismus und Christentum 1880–1980," in *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 66 [1982], pp. 58–66, which roughly describes the phases of Buddhist-Christian encounter from the western point of view.) Therefore, I think Kern's book to be a valuable contribution to Buddhist-Christian mutual understanding.

Last but not least a few technical remarks: This book is surely not intended to be read only by students of sinology. They will note that Kern's language in his translations is modelled after western philosophy and sometimes very easily equates Chinese terms with western terminology which make a smooth reading but suggest too close an affinity. To a certain extent, Kern gives a counterbalance in his footnotes. The transliterations are in some cases incorrect and inconsistent, especially those concerning Sanskrit terms, and languages are mixed without specifying them. Probably Kern wanted to use those terms which he thought might be the most well-known to his western

readers. Still, a sentence like "Zhuhong war ein stark vom Amitabha-Buddhismus geprägter Zen-Mönch" (p. 48) makes a strange

reading. These minor defects, however, do not diminish the value of this book.

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INGRID SCHUSTER: *Vorbilder und Zerrbilder. China und Japan im Spiegel der deutschen Literatur 1773–1890*. Schweizer Asiatische Studien, Monographien 6. Bern/Frankfurt a.M./New York/Paris: Peter Lang, 1988. 402 S. (PB). ISBN 3-261-03816-0

Für die Kenntnis Ostasiens sind wir in größtem Maße den frühen Jesuitenmissionaren verpflichtet. Franz Xaver (1506–1552) hat bereits die Bedeutung Chinas und Japans als Missionsgebiete erkannt. Auf Grund seiner eigenen Japanerfahrung hat er eine Akkommodationsmethode entwickelt, die von dem Visitator Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) präzisiert wurde: Anpassung an die Verhältnisse des Landes, intensives Sprachstudium, Akzeptanz einheimischer Gebräuche und gezieltes Zugehen auf die Führungsschicht und die Gelehrten. Ein erster Höhepunkt der Missionstätigkeit war die Gesandtschaft, die drei Daimyōs aus Kyūshū 1584–1586 an den Papst schickten. Die Publizität in Europa war enorm und ist noch heute aus zahlreichen zeitgenössischen Veröffentlichungen erkennbar. Während die Jahresbriefe und andere Publikationen zu den bekannten Standardquellen gehören, wendet sich die Autorin den Jesuitendramen zu. Es handelt sich um Schauspiele, die von den Patres der Jesuitenkollegien verfaßt und von den Schülern aufgeführt wurden. Das Ziel war pädagogischer Natur, und Glaubensstärke und kindliche Pietät standen im Mittelpunkt. Das erste Japan betreffende Stück dürfte *Japoniorum martyres* (1607) sein; solche Dramen wurden sogar noch, zumindest in der Schweiz, nach der Aufhebung des Jesu-

itenordens (1773) gespielt. Das bekannteste Japandrama handelt von drei opferbereiten *Japonesischen Brüdern*, über die zuerst François Solier in seiner japanischen Kirchengeschichte (1627–1629) berichtet hatte; dieses Stück wurde später auch außerhalb des Ordens gespielt. Aufführungen sind für die Zeit 1674–1857 nachgewiesen (S. 65–85).

Auf die Rolle des Konfuzianismus als Morallehre und der kindlichen Pietät im besonderen hatte schon P. Philippe Couplet in *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687) hingewiesen; P. F. Noël übersetzte dann neben den Fünf Klassikern auch das *Hsiao-ching* (*Sinarum imperii libri classici sex*, 1711), und eine genauere Übersetzung kam später in den *Mémoires concernant les Chinois* (1779) heraus. Insofern war Europa über die besondere Rolle der Kindesliebe in Ostasien gut informiert. Im Gefolge der Christenverfolgungen in Ostasien wiesen die Jesuiten allerdings daraufhin, daß der Konfuzianismus als Morallehre hoch zu bewerten, als Staatsreligion aus ihrer Sicht aber abzulehnen sei.

Das literarische Motiv von der treulosen Witwe – aus der Novellensammlung *Chin-ku ch'i-kuan* – hat zuerst P. d'Entrecolles in Du Haldes *Description ... de la Chine* (1735) bekanntgemacht. Wir finden es wieder bei Oliver Goldsmith im *Citizen of the world*