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On the Story of the Jesuits' Action in the Southern Ming Dynasty¹

In 1646, Zhu Youlang (Emperor Yongli) established his “temporary government”, and announced his intent to establish a new dynasty the following year with himself as emperor (i.e., the first year of Yongli’s reign). In this way, the Southern Ming Dynasty was founded, but it had to confront the army of the recently established Qing Dynasty in the north. In 1661, as the Qing army drove southward, however, Emperor Yongli’s reign collapsed, having existed for only 16 years.

The northern and southern political powers of the late Ming-early Qing period both had close relationships with Catholic missionaries. “At that time, geographically, the missionaries were separately connected with the Qing Dynasty, the powers behind the peasant uprising, and with the Southern Ming Dynasty. In order to protect the ‘seeds’ of Catholicism in China, the missionaries often used the phrase ‘each served his Lord’ to guide their actions.”² The missionaries Johann Adam Schall von Bell and Nicholas Longobardi served the Qing Dynasty in Beijing, while Francesco Sambiassi served first Emperor Hongguang and then Emperor Longwu of the several reigns of the Southern Ming Dynasty. Among these relationships, the one between the court of Yongli and the Jesuits is especially prominent. During this time a number of high-ranking, powerful individuals were converted to Catholicism, while at the same time the Christian missionaries Andre-Xavier Koffler from Austria and his successor Michel-Pierre Boym from Poland each took part in military and diplomatic affairs, as well as successfully

1. The study of Western missionaries and China was revived in the 1980s in China and is one of the major fields of research of the Centre of Comparative & World Literature at Shanghai Normal University. The scholars devoted to this field are Professor Sun Jingyao, Professor Liu Yunhua, Professor Song Lihua, Deng Yanyan, Ph. D., etc. They have published a series of essays and works on this subject. The Ph. D candidates and graduate students trained by the Centre also focus on the study of the related subjects from the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Opium War.
2. Sun Shangyang and Zhong Mingdan, *1840 nian qian de Zhongguo jidujiao* (*Christianity in China before 1984*), Beijing, Xuyuan chubanshe, 2004, p. 313. All the English translations in this essay, either from Chinese or French, have been translated by the authors of this article.

spreading Catholicism. This kind of "adaptation" did not exist in the preceding dynasties when foreign missionaries were involved, or in the contemporary Qing Dynasty and other reigns of the Southern Ming Dynasty.

Records from both China and Western countries, and the left-over remnants in Anlong, Guizhou Province, not only confirm the historical facts, but help to show that what Christian missionaries' really "adapted" to was the military, political and diplomatic affairs of the areas they served in. Like the Nestorians of the Tang Dynasty, the Jesuits "expired" due to the fact that they adapted too strongly to the reign of Yongli. Although the position of the Yongli's reign itself was tottering and precarious, the autocratic, political, and Confucian traditions of the times, which the government was based on, could only make the Jesuits' missionary work and their adaptation to such traditions, although seemingly in agreement, actually be at odds with the said traditions, and create a stumbling block that eventually led to their downfall.³

Among the important chancellors of Yongli's court, some were converted to Christianity, more than in any other court in Chinese history. According to the chapter of *Yongli Annals*⁴ entitled *Biographies*, a conventional narrative account of the time written by Wang Fuzhi, who used to work in Yongli's court, some important chancellors, such as the Minister of Personnel, Qu Shisi, the Chief of Military Affairs, Jiao Lian, and the Minister of the Court, Pang Tianshou were Christians. Among the remaining eighty chancellors, some were also Christians, while some made an alliance with the Christian officials; still others opposed Christianity. The Christian officials purposefully, or inadvertently, formed their own political party. The queen mother, the empress, and the emperor's son, and about ten other people within the Yongli palace all joined this party. The ruling class of other reigns was completely devoid of Christians. The fact that many of the ruling class in the Yongli reign were Christians made it unique.

The missionary who brought Catholicism into the Southern Ming Dynasty was Andre-Xavier Koffler. Within the palace, the minister of the court, Pang Tianshou, advised people to accept Christianity. This way of doing missionary work, working from the inside-out, was one of the tactics for the conversion of the Southern Ming Dynasty. As many of the Western missionaries said, "The spread of Catholicism in the palace was due to the combined efforts of Pang Tianshou and Koffler."⁵

3. Cf. Sun Jingyao and Long Chaoyun, "Yongli wangchao yesu huishi 'shiyong zhengce' de guaichuan yu baiyin" (The Jesuits' Adaptation Policies and the Causes of Their Failure in the reign of Yongli), in *Shanghai Shifan Daxue xuebao, Zhe xue shehui ke xue ban* (*Journal of Shanghai Normal University, Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition*), Shanghai, Shanghai Shifan Daxue xuebao bianjibu, vol. 1, 2010, p. 126-136.
4. Wang Fuzhi [Ming Dynasty], *Yongli shilu: liezhuan (Yongli Annals: Biographies)*, Beijing, Beijing guji chubanshe, 2002.
5. Chabrié, Robert, *Michel Boym: jésuite polonais et la fin des Ming en Chine (1646-1662): contribution à l'histoire des Missions d'Extrême-Orient*, Paris, Pierre Bossuet, 1933, p. 64. [Original quotation: En Pang-Achille et le P. Koffler il faut saluer les introducteurs du christianisme dans le palais du souverain chinois.]

Given this situation, there are a number of questions to be raised. When and where were important people, including chancellors and concubines, of the Yongli court converted? Why were they converted? Why did the relationship between the Yongli court and the Jesuits' aims appear united outwardly but divided in essence?

Concerning the time and the place of the royal members' conversions, the book *Michel Boym, jésuite polonais et la fin des Ming en Chine (1646-1662): contribution à l'histoire des Missions d'Extrême-Orient* (hereinafter referred to as *Michel Boym, jésuite polonais*) written by the French scholar Robert Chabrié records that, firstly, "about 50 concubines. . . [and] about 40 high officials"⁶ converted to Christianity. It also speaks of the conversion of the Queen Mother: "eight days later, what the Jesuit predicted before almost took place because seven provinces had been won back".⁷ Secondly, this book clearly records the place of the baptisms as "the palace in Zhaoqing"⁸. That is to say, the baptisms took place when Yongli was in Zhaoqing, the temporary palace in Guangdong Province.

The purpose of the Jesuits during the reign of Yongli was first to convert the royalty and high officials. Chabrié's work records that, on the day after the queen mother's baptism, "Yongli entered the palace to visit the queen mother, who told him to kneel before the Catholic image", in order to "request God's blessing and protection in the fight against the Qing army". The missionary Koffler said that "he foresaw the territories could be won back soon",⁹ that is to say, both the missionary and the converts had the same political aim.

The most convincing evidence of the purpose of the Jesuits while at the Yongli court was the conversion of the emperor's son. *Michel Boym, jésuite polonais* records: "Although Yongli didn't accept Christianity totally, he didn't oppose his family's baptism because he allowed his son, the queen mother and the concubines to be baptized. Father Koffler baptized the emperor's son and named him Constantine. The Chinese meaning of this name was that the little prince would bring calm to the chaotic country."¹⁰ It was the baptism

6. *Ibid.*, p. 67. (Original quotation: une cinquantaine de concubines impériales, [...] une quarantaine de hauts dignitaires)
7. *Ibid.*, p. 79. (Original quotation: Au bout de huit jours, ce que le Jésuite avait annoncé se réalisait presque, puisque sept provinces chinoises faisaient spontanément acte d'obédience envers leur nouveau souverain.)
8. *Ibid.*, p. 67. (Original quotation: La Cour de Tchao-king-fou).
9. *Ibid.*, p. 79. (Original quotation: "Lorsque le jour suivant Young-li, regagnant son palais, voulut rendre visite à Hélène, elle le pria de s'agenouiller devant l'image de Dieu qui se trouvait chez elle"; "et lui demandait comme une grâce d'intercéder pour elle auprès des Tartares ou de tous autres assaillants, au cas où dans un moment de trouble ou de révolte, ils viendraient avec le désir de l'outrager"; "il lui prédit que la situation politique s'améliorerait et que Young-li rentrerait en possession de tout son héritage.")
10. *Ibid.*, p. 68 (Original quotation: S'il n'adhéra pas intégralement au christianisme, du moins ne s'opposa-t-il pas aux pieux désirs des siens et alla-t-il jusqu'à consentir au baptême du prince, son fils, qui, ainsi que toutes les princesses... Le P. Koffler choisit pour l'héritier présomptif le prénom de Constantin qui, approuvé de Young-li et de sa cour, se prononçait en chinois Tang-ting et signifiait, dans la langue du pays 'Celui qui doit prendre une détermination'.)

and subsequent naming of Yongli's son, Constantine, that united both sides' political desires, though not for the same reasons.

The first step of the religious project that Father Koffler and PANG Tianshou cooperated on was already over. They now started the next step of consolidating and expanding the result of the first step of this religious project with Boym taking a leading role. Boym saw the emperor's son Constantine as the Roman emperor Constantine who would make Christianity official and saw queen mother Helena as the Roman queen mother Monique. [...] Yongli himself also seemed to welcome Catholicism. Would ancient, heathen China follow the emperor and the queen mother to find the path of redemption? The answer depended on whether the Ming Dynasty could consolidate its status and avoid the threat of the Qing Dynasty.¹¹

The queen mother, the emperor, and Yongli's chancellors had the same goal as the missionaries, to help "the Ming Dynasty consolidate its status". As for the idea that "ancient, heathen China would follow the emperor and the queen mother to find the path of redemption", both parties disagreed on this point. Chabrié says,

When the Empress Anna was pregnant, Father Koffler advised Yongli and his wife to pray for God to grant them a son. Father Koffler gave them six white candles and told them to light the candles before the image of God when the baby was born. Not long after this, Empress Anna gave birth to a son in the temporary palace at Nanning. Yongli was very happy and asked Father Koffler to help foresee the fate of the emperor's son. Koffler took this chance to explain the reason for God's blessing. If the prince were to convert to Christianity, he would be blessed by God and his future would be bright. If the boy was brought up in accordance with religious teachings, he would be a great leader in the future. Later, the queen mothers Helena and Maria and Empress Anna asked Koffler to baptize the prince. At that time, Yongli was at another place, so Koffler refused, saying that the baptism needed to be permitted by the emperor and further that in the future the prince could not follow the system of polygamy. At the beginning, Yongli didn't agree, . . . but after three months the prince was seriously ill. Father Koffler said the disease was a sign that God was angry at Yongli's hesitation, so the emperor allowed the prince to be baptized. The prince regained his health.¹²

11. *Ibid.*, p. 87. (Original quotation: La première phase de l'action religieuse engagée par le P. Koffler et Pang-Achille se trouvait close; une seconde phase s'ouvrait dont le P. Boym devait être le héros: c'était celle de la consolidation et de l'extension des résultats acquis. N' était-il pas permis en effet de voir en Constantin, le futur instaurateur du culte romain dans l'Empire du Milieu et de compter sur l'appui efficace d'Hélène, cette Monique chinoise, [...] Young-li, lui-même, se montrait, somme toute, très favorable au catholicisme. Tout cela n'était-ce pas un sérieux indice que la vieille Chine païenne, au souffle de l'esprit d'Occident, allait, à l'exemple et sous l'influence de ses Princes, entrer, elle aussi, dans la voie du salut et se jeter au pied des autels? Mais le succès final dépendait, de toute évidence, de la position solide de la cour Ming vis-à-vis des Tartares toujours menaçants.)
12. *Ibid.*, p. 80-81. (Original quotation: Dans le même temps, l'Impératrice Anne était enceinte. Le P. Koffler conseilla à Young-li et à sa femme de prier Dieu afin qu'il leur

The above excerpts from *Michel Boym, jésuite polonais* have few corresponding records in Chinese histories, but the relics of the Yongli's reign that still survive in Anlong, Guizhou Province can be seen as evidence, especially the memorial stone of the queen mother, the empress, and the emperor's son left in the Catholic Church in Anlong. This dolomite stone's height is 79 cm, with a diameter of 45 cm. The top of the stone is carved into a ring-shaped lotus flower. The body of the stone has six faces. Onto four of the faces are carved respectively the Christian names of the two queen mothers, the empress, and the emperor's son—Helena, Maria, Anna, and Constantine. A fifth face contains the words "Mingmo Yongli" (the late Ming, Yongli's reign) and "1662 *nian ren yin*" (the year 1662 *ren yin*, designating the year according to the Chinese cyclical calendar). The sixth face, on the back of the stone, holds an engraved lion which has already been partly worn away; however, the head and the tail of the lion are still visible. There are also several Latin words engraved on it. "Me" and "leo" are some of the words that can still be identified.

Consequently, the Western records and Chinese relics often tell a different story: on one side, "Yongli was very happy" because "God granted them a son"; and after "the emperor allowed the prince to be baptized . . . the prince regained his health", which meant Yongli's reign had a successor. But, as LU Xun noted, somewhat critically, "a panacea religion . . . responding to every plea"¹³ always prevails in China. On the other hand, the missionaries' aim was very clear: "If the boy was brought up in accordance with religious teachings, he would be a great leader in the future." Thus, the empire could "find the path of redemption" and become an Eastern "Roman Empire". The aim of the missionaries' upper-class "adaptation policy" was to use the revival

donnât un prince héritier et il envoya six cierges blancs et bénits pour qu'on les allumât devant les saintes images pendant l'accouchement. Très peu après, à Nan-ming-fou, dans le Kouang-si où se trouvait temporairement, selon le P. de Mailla, la Cour impériale, Anne mit au monde un fils. Le Prince Ming rempli d'allégresse en avisa le P. Koffler et le chargea de tirer l'horoscope du nouveau-né. Le très avisé missionnaire, saisissant l'occasion offerte, rappela à l'empereur, dans un langage astrologique, les bienfaits qu'il avait déjà reçus de la Providence, à cause de la bonne volonté témoignée par lui, à maintes reprises, à l'égard de la religion. Il lui donna à espérer des faveurs encore beaucoup plus grandes s'il entrait vraiment dans les rangs des chrétiens. Il lui recommanda d'élever pieusement son fils afin que ce successeur régnât avec sagesse sur la Chine pour le bonheur et la prospérité de ses peuples. Un tel langage si habilement édifiant, fut très bien reçu de Young-li. Puis les Impératrices pressèrent le P. André-Xavier Koffler de baptiser l'enfant. À ce moment-là l'empereur était absent. Le Jésuite s'y refusa, exigeant avec une prudence pleine de tact le consentement du père, et la promesse donnée par lui préalablement que son fils serait instruit dans la loi divine et détourné de la polygamie...Young-li ajournait sans cesse son autorisation. Trois mois passèrent et des dissentiments naquirent même, de ce chef, dans la maison impériale. Mais voic que l'héritier présomptif tomba si gravement malade... Le P. Koffler ne manqua pas d'interpréter ce fait comme un signe du mécontentement divin, cause des coupables hésitations de Young-li. Le petit prince fut donc baptisé [...], et alors la guérison, ne se fit pas attendre.)

13. Wu Zhongjie, *Lu Xun zhuan (Biography of Lu Xun)*, Shanghai, Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2000, p. 160.

of the Yongli reign to make a “new Roman Catholic Empire” in the East—seemingly in agreement, but actually at odds with the intention to revive Yongli’s royal reign.

For Yongli’s reign, which had to fight against the superior Qing armies without itself possessing a stable foundation, the most important matter was to gain victory in the war in order to preserve its own government. The “adaptation” of the missionaries contributed greatly to achieving this goal. During this time, the Jesuit missionaries provided cannons and guns, as well as troops, and even gave military advice and assisted with diplomatic affairs. The adaptation policy of the missionaries at the time was focused on what was considered the two most important fields for Yongli’s reign: military and diplomatic matters.

Firstly, let us examine the military aid from the missionaries to the Yongli reign. According to Chabrié, through the actions of emissaries, “hundreds of firearms together with a letter” were given to Pang Tianshou “to be used by the emperor and his soldiers.”¹⁴ Moreover, between March and July of 1647, in 1648 and again in 1649, Yongli’s army won three battles after gaining guns, cannons, and other military aid from the church. Due to these victories, Yongli “regained the four provinces of Guangxi, Guangdong, Fujian, and Jiangxi.”¹⁵

Chinese historical materials also record the same facts. For instance, according to the chapter of *Yongli Annals* entitled “Biography of Eunuchs”,¹⁶ Pang Tianshou, the leader of the emperor’s soldiers, was “the commander of all of the eunuchs. His Yong Wei army only had 1000 soldiers . . . All of the flags of the Yong Wei army were decorated using marks from Western languages, as if part of a children’s game.”¹⁷ During this time the reign of Yongli made many military advances: “In 1648 he regained the four provinces of Guangxi, Guangdong, Fujian, and Jiangxi and made Zhaoqing into his capital.” *Yongli Annals* records that after Jin Shengheng returned to the side of the Yongli reign, “The army of Shengheng slowly became stronger as his soldiers from southern China exaggerated his power in order to recruit others. So Fujian, Hubei, and Jiangnan [parts of southern China] all wanted to join Jin Shengheng’s army.”¹⁸ Apart from these records, the same facts can also be found in the books *The History of Southern Ming*

14. Chabrié, Robert, *Michel Boym jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine (1646-1662), Contribution à l'histoire des mission d'Extrême-Orient*, Paris, Pierre Bossuet, 1933, p. 85 [Original quotation: [...], où ces émissaires s'apprêtaient à remonter, 100 mousquets de fabrication lusitanienne à l'adresse de Pang-Achille, en y joignant une lettre qui expliquait que cela pourrait aider à armer les soldats de l'empereur.]

15. *Ibid.*, p. 60. [Original quotation: en 1648, quand il se fut rendu maître du Kouang-Toung, du Kouang-si, du Foukien et du Kiang-si.]

16. Wang Fuzhi [Ming Dynasty], *Yongli shilu: Huanzhe liezhuan (Yongli Annals: Biography of Eunuchs)*, Beijing, Beijing guji chubanshe, 2002.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 109

Dynasty as Far as I Know,¹⁹ *An Unofficial History of the Longwu and Yongli reigns of the Southern Ming Dynasty*²⁰ and *Lingbiao Chronological Records*.²¹

All this evidence demonstrates that the Jesuit missionaries actively participated in military affairs under their “adaptation” policy of helping “Emperor Yongli begin to recover part of his territory.”²² But when we examine these historical records, we can see that the Jesuits had their own reasons for acting as they did. This can be clearly illustrated by Father Koffler’s reproaching of Pang Tianshou:

. . . Pang Tianshou spread Catholicism throughout the palace and was loyal to his emperor, but sometimes he considered his own safety without a thought for the emperor’s cause. In the early years, when Yongli planned to revive his dynasty, the commander-in-chief of the Christian army, Jiao Lian, led his soldiers as well as the Portuguese army, both of which were governed by Pang Tianshou. Father Koffler probably entered into Jiao Lian’s army at the same time as the Portuguese allies. Later, Pang Tianshou led Father Koffler to Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong, and Guangxi to recruit new soldiers. On the way, they heard that the Qing army was pursuing Emperor Yongli, and that Yongli and his chancellors had been separated. Pang Tianshou planned to run away, but before he did, he told his plan to Father Koffler. Father Koffler reproached Tianshou, saying that a good Christian shouldn’t fear death but instead should face hardship. It would be better to die with the emperor. Tianshou was essentially a good person, so he was moved and inspired upon hearing Koffler’s words. Weeping, Tianshou swore that he would protect the emperor and the court with his life, without regard to success or failure. When the political situation had stabilized, Tianshou was summoned by Emperor Yongli, and he told the emperor face to face about the advice Father Koffler had given. Because of this, Yongli regarded Father Koffler more highly than before. After this, Tianshou and Father Koffler’s mutual efforts spread Catholicism throughout the palace.²³

19. Wang Fuzhi & Qian Bingdeng [Ming Dynasty], *Yongli shilu; Suozhi lu (Yongli Annals and The History of the Southern Ming Dynasty as Far as I Know)*, Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987.
20. Qu Gongmei [Ming Dynasty], *Tiannan yishi (An Unofficial History of the Longwu and Yongli reigns of the Southern Ming Dynasty)*, Hangzhou, Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1985.
21. Lu Kezao [Ming Dynasty], *Lingbiao jinian (Lingbiao Chronological Records)*, Hangzhou, Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1985.
22. Chabrié, Robert, *Michel Boym jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine (1646-1662), Contribution à l’histoire des mission d’Extrême-Orient*, Paris, Pierre Bossuet, 1933, p. 61 [Original quotation: l’héritier des Ming était parvenu à soumettre à son autorité une partie de l’empire de ses pères.]
23. *Ibid.*, p. 75-76. [Original quotation: C’est lui évidemment qui, avec sa foi ardente, travailla à la conversion des habitants du Palais impérial; c’est lui qui montra à Young-li un attachement sans égal [...]. Il y eut cependant un moment où, fléchissant dans son courage,—un peu comme l’apôtre saint Pierre,—il fut amené, non, il est vrai, jusqu’à renier son maître, mais à concevoir le projet d’abandonner sa cause pour se mettre en sûreté. C’était au début de l’activité de Young-li, alors que ce prince cherchait à reconquérir l’Empire de ses pères. Le Mandarin chrétien Luc (ou Lucas), avec de nombreux effectifs renforcés par de l’artillerie portugaise (envoyée de Macao sous les ordres du capitaine Nicolas Ferreira, que nous avons déjà nommé), était venu soutenir

This "Christian responsibility" can be seen in I Samuel (26:15, 16) of the Bible: "David said to Abner, 'Are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. This thing that you have done is not good.'"²⁴ After this experience, Tianshou always followed Father Koffler's instructions:

Once there was a mutiny in Yongli's palace, and Yongli was about to be killed. The queen mother Helena wanted to hang herself, but Tianshou's timely intervention saved her life. Another time, several chancellors within the palace rebelled and the situation was dangerous. As they endured many hardships on the road, Tianshou continually advised the emperor and queen mother to accept Christianity and gain consolation from faith.²⁵

Two important details can be taken from these historical materials. First, Yongli encountered the Qing army and so the emperor and his chancellors were separated. Also, during a mutiny, Emperor Yongli and the queen mother received help from Tianshou just in the nick of time. Supporting evidence for these details can be found in *Yongli Annals*. Concerning the first situation, *Yongli Annals* records: "In the spring of 1651, the Qing army attacked Guangdong province. The queen mother wanted to abandon Zhaoqing and escape to the west with the emperor . . . The queen mother, the empress, and the emperor's concubines had already boarded a ship, and the emperor entered his sedan chair. [Yan] Qiheng became angry, and, weeping, blamed the chamberlain Pang Tianshou. Tianshou replied, 'The officials working outside the palace insisted that the emperor should run away quickly, but I

le parti du prétendant Ming: l'ensemble des armées de ce dernier était commandé par Pang-Achille. Le P. Koffler accompagnait le mandarin Luc; il avait suivi le contingent portugais obtenu de Macao par l'intermédiaire du P. Sambiasi, comme on a déjà eu l'occasion de le dire. Pang-Achille emmena bientôt avec lui le P. Koffler dans le Houkouang pour faire de nouvelles levées. En chemin ils apprirent que Young-li, poursuivi par les Tartares, était délaissé de ses partisans. Alors Pang-Achille décontenancé, songea à prendre la fuite lui aussi; il consulta là-dessus le P. Koffler qui lui répondit, avec autant de noblesse que d'habileté, qu'un bon chrétien devait mépriser la mort, se porter au secours de son souverain et mourir, s'il le fallait, à ses côtés. L'honnête homme qu' était Pang-Achille se ressaisit: il jura au missionnaire, avec des larmes dans les yeux, qu'il persévérerait, quoi qu'il dût lui arriver, dans son loyalisme fidèle. Les affaires s'arrangeant momentanément, Pang-Achille rendit compte de cette conversation à Young-li et, ainsi qu'on le comprend, cela mit en bonne posture, aux yeux du prince, le P. Koffler et servit puissamment la cause du christianisme à la Cour.]

24. *Holy Bible*, NRSV. Shanghai, National TSPM & CCC, 2000, p.464.

25. Chabrié, Robert. *Michel Boym jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine (1646-1662), Contribution à l'histoire des mission d'Extrême-Orient*. Paris: Pierre Bossuet, 1933, p. 77. (Original quotation: Un moment Young-li pensa périr dans une révolte de mutins: l'impératrice douairière Hélène fut même sur le point de se pendre. Pang-Achille arriva à l'empêcher de mettre ce sombre dessein à exécution. Une autre fois, c' était la trahison possible de quelques mandarins dont il fallait sérieusement se méfier [...]. Au milieu de ces tristes et angoissantes alarmes, Pang-Achille exhortait de son mieux ses maîtres à se rapprocher de plus en plus de la religion chrétienne et à trouver dans les certitudes de la foi un refuge et une consolation.)

was not one of them.’ Qiheng suspected this was not true, and did not know how to respond.”²⁶

The second event, “Tianshou’s timely intervention,” is recorded in the chapter of *Yongli Annals* entitled “The Biography of the Traitorous Chancellors”²⁷. When Liu Chengyin (a chancellor in the Yongli court) surrendered to the Qing army, he

sent a messenger with a letter to report to the emperor, saying: ‘The enemy’s power is great; your Majesty should protect yourself as I do not have enough power to protect you.’ The emperor hurriedly fled. The city gate wouldn’t open, so Pang Tianshou and Ma Jixiang told their soldiers to use a sharp axe to cut through the lock. The emperor rode out alone on a horse. The queen mother and the empress left in a sedan chair, the palace concubines went out on foot. The emperor’s infant son was wrapped in a cloth and carried out by his wet nurse [...]”²⁸

In the same way, *The History of the Southern Ming Dynasty as Far as I Know* also clearly records that

the palace officials were scattered like stars; the grand secretary Wu Bing was caught and killed. Liu Chengyin surrendered the city to the Qing Dynasty . . . The emperor left Jingjiang and arrived at Liuzhou, in Gu’ni. The commander-in-chief Hou Xing and the director of royal ceremonies, the eunuch Pang Tianshou, led a navy of 5000 soldiers to meet the emperor. It happened that it was raining heavily and the road was very muddy. The emperor’s sedan chair and his royal clothes had to be left behind piece by piece.²⁹

These historical facts are in accordance with one another, and reveal the importance of Pang Tianshou, who was “guided” by the missionaries. Apparently, this record that the Christian teachings were more powerful than the Confucian traditions of the “way” (*dao tong*) is highly exaggerated. The influence of Christian teaching is seen in passages such as: “As they endured many hardships on the road, Tianshou continually advised the emperor and queen mother to accept Christianity and gain consolation from faith.”

Secondly, let us examine the missionaries’ inclusion in the diplomatic affairs of the Yongli reign. The most powerful evidence is the letters the queen mother and Pang Tianshou wrote to the Pope and to the superior general of the Jesuits, which still survive today in the Vatican archives. From

26. Wang Fuzhi [Ming Dynasty], *Yongli shilu (Yongli Annals)*, Beijing, Beijing guji chubanshe, 2002, p. 33.

27. *Yongli shilu: panchen liezhuan (Yongli Annals: The Biography of the Traitorous Chancellors)*.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

29. Wang Fuzhi & Qian Bingdeng [Ming Dynasty], *Yongli shilu; Suozhi lu (Yongli Annals and The History of the Southern Ming Dynasty as Far as I Know)*, Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987, p. 273.

these letters we can see that the Queen Mother and Pang Tianshou had additional motives for re-establishing the Ming Dynasty.

The person behind the plan to send emissaries to Rome was a Jesuit missionary: "It is easy to figure out that the Jesuits wanted to develop Christianity in China through assisting in the revival of the Ming Dynasty. . . . [The Jesuits] hoped that the West would feel compassion for the Ming court, and make the other Christian kings aid them by the intervention of the Pope."³⁰ The political aim was: "Will ancient, heathen China follow the emperor and the queen mother to find the path of redemption?"³¹ "In 1650, these newly converted Chinese Christians sent Father Boym to Rome for the purpose of informing Innocent X of China's situation and getting the help from the other Christian kings".³²

However, it is worthwhile to compare the Western records with the letters from the queen mother and Pang Tianshou to the Pope³³.

Here is the letter from the queen mother during the reign of Yongli to the Pope:

The serene, holy, graceful and solemn queen mother Helena of the Grand Ming Dynasty greets Pope Innocent X, . . . , I wish the Pope and the Catholic Church plead with God to bless the Ming Dynasty's revival and bring peace for the 18th emperor of the Ming Dynasty who is the 12th generation descendant of Zhu Yuanzhang [the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty] and for his chancellors who have learned to respect Jesus Christ. We are looking forward to more Jesuits being sent by the Holy Father to spread Catholicism . . . Now the Jesuit Father Boym who has a good knowledge of the situation of China will be sent back to Rome soon to present my inten-

30. Chabrié, Robert, *Michel Boym jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine (1646-1662), Contribution à l'histoire des mission d'Extrême-Orient*, Paris, Pierre Bossuet, 1933, p. 91. (Original quotation: il est facile de se figurer combien les Jésuites, dans leur ardeur sacerdotale, devaient attacher de prix à une restauration monarchique dont on pouvait attendre tant d'avantages pour la cause catholique [...]. le monde occidental au sort du prétendant Ming et tenter d'obtenir en sa faveur, sans doute par l'intermédiaire du pape, l'appui décisif de quelques princes chrétiens, n' était-ce pas là de la belle diplomatie, hardie et fructueuse?)
31. *Ibid.*, p. 87. (Original quotation: Tout cela n'était-ce pas un sérieux indice que la vieille Chine païenne, au souffle de l'esprit d'Occident, allait, à l'exemple et sous l'influence de ses Princes, entrer, elle aussi, dans la voie du salut et se jeter au pied des autels?)
32. *Ibid.*, p. 92. (Original quotation: En 1650, ces illustres néophytes envoyèrent à Rome, le P. Michel Boym, Polonais, pour intéresser le pape Innocent X et les princes chrétiens en leur faveur)
33. The two letters were written in Chinese originally. Robert Chabrié used the French translation in his *Michel Boym, jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine (1646-1662), Contribution à l'histoire des mission d'Extrême-Orient*. Cf. p. 95-96; p. 101-103. The Chinese scholar Feng Chengjun who translated the book *Michel Boym, jésuite polonais* into Chinese adopted the original texts of the two letters which still survive in the Vatican archives in his translation. Cf. Chabrié, Robert, *Mingmo fengshi luoma jiaoting yesuishi bumige zhuan (Michel Boym jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine (1646-1662), Contribution à l'histoire des mission d'Extrême-Orient)*, Tr. Feng Chengjun, Beijing, Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941, p. 51; p. 52-53. The English versions in this essay are translated from the Chinese.

tions to the Holy Father. I will send a diplomatic envoy to Saint Peter's Basilica to show my respect as soon as the Ming Dynasty recovers peace. . . . The 11th day of the 10th month in the 4th year of Yongli's reign [1650 according to Gregorian calendar].³⁴

Here is the letter from the Ming official Pang Tianshou to the Pope:

The Minister of the Court, Pang-Achille prostrates before Innocent X, . . . , our Empire is still in tumult, so I send Father Boym to return to the West, . . . to plead with God for grace to shine on the Grand Ming Dynasty and bless our Empire with peace. . . . To send more Jesuits to our Kingdom and teach the people to convert to Christianity, . . . The 8th day of the 10th month in the 4th year of the reign of Yongli [the year 1650]³⁵

As the above quotations indicate, there were two differences between the goals of the Yongli reign and those of the Jesuits' in the diplomatic affair of sending envoys to Catholic Europe: first, the letter does not directly ask for military support, only requesting European Catholics to "plead with God to bless the Ming Dynasty's revival and peace", and "plead with God for grace to shine on the Grand Ming Dynasty and bless our Empire with peace". At most they are "looking forward to more Jesuits being sent by the Holy Father to spread Catholicism", and "to teach the people to repent and convert to Christianity". Second, although this diplomatic task was put in the hands of Father Boym, the purpose was not the same as the Jesuits' hope "that the West could feel compassion for Ming's court, and make the other Christian kings to aid them by the intervention of the Pope." The letter merely mentions "the Jesuit Father Boym who has a good knowledge of the situation of China will be sent back to Rome soon to present my intentions to the Holy Father", and the queen mother's aim was just to "send a diplomatic envoy to Saint Peter's Basilica to show [her] respects as soon as the Ming Dynasty recovers peace".

It is obvious that the strong political aim of the missionaries, which was to "develop Christianity in China through giving a hand to the revival of the Ming Dynasty", and finally to realize the ideal that "the ancient, heathen China will follow the emperor and the queen mother to find the path of redemption", was not at all mentioned in the letters written by the queen mother and Pang Tianshou. As mentioned above, the climax of the adaptation of the Jesuits to the Southern Ming Dynasty, which was mainly in military affairs and political diplomacy, made the missionaries Yongli's allied partners on the surface. While the Jesuits and the Ming Dynasty appeared to be in harmony concerning fighting against the Qing army and sending envoys to Rome, the two actually diverged from each other as far as Confucian traditions of the "way" (*dao tong*) and political traditions of the "way" (*zheng tong*) of the Yongli reign.

34. Chabrié, Robert, *Mingmo fengshi luoma jiaoting yesuhoishi bumige zhuan (Michel Boym jésuite polonais et la fin de Ming en Chine [1646-1662], Contribution à l'histoire des missions d'Extrême-Orient)*, Tr. Feng Chengjun, Beijing, Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941, p. 51.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

Hence, history shows that no matter what efforts the Jesuits made to adapt to Yongli's reign, the Christian doctrines advocated by them cannot fit in with the autocratic, political, and Confucian traditions of the Ming Dynasty. This can be seen clearly from the fact that the missionary Father Koffler served as an official in the reign of Yongli, but he only held office for less than a year before being dismissed. "In the first month of the third year of Yongli's reign (1649), the emperor was at Zhaoqing. The Westerner Father Koffler handed out the new [Western] calendar, and the emperor issued a decree to put the calendar into practice." In addition, Koffler was vigorously recommended by Pang Tianshou, who "recommended that Koffler serve as the director of the Imperial Observatory and begin to implement the Western calendar."³⁶ But before a year had passed, this attempt had failed: ". . . In the twelfth month of the third year of Yongli's reign [1649] the official Yin Sanpin told the emperor: Koffler is using the Western calendar without authorization, throwing the old calendar into chaos. He begged the emperor to still use the traditional calendar. It was done."³⁷ The director of the Imperial Observatory was the Ming Dynasty official in charge of observing astronomical phenomena and setting the dates for festivals. This was not the problem; during this time of war, whether or not Koffler held this position or not was not very important. Only in times of peace it would be an important position. The key to the problem, the reason a Jesuit missionary only held office for less than a year before being dismissed, was that "he used the Western calendar without authorization, throwing the old calendar into chaos" and therefore it was decided to "still use the traditional calendar". This means the Chinese traditional political system (including the role of civil chancellors who do not have any real power) could not be changed. Even though Koffler was recommended by the queen mother Helena's godfather, Pang Tianshou, traditions still could not be changed. Just as the scholar Qian Zhongshu said: "Traditions are unwilling to change. Laziness forms a habit; habits develop into rules. 'Often' becomes 'natural' and 'necessary'."³⁸

In summary, that the adaptation policy of the missionaries had no effect amply demonstrates the alienating power of the autocratic system. So it is historical inevitability that its success and failure are both in the Southern Ming Dynasty.

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36. Wang Fuzhi [Ming Dynasty], *Yongli shilu (Yongli Annals)*, Beijing, Beijing guji chubanshe, 2002, p. 12, 235.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

38. Qian Zhongshu, *Qi Zui Ji (Seven Essays Patched together)*, Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995, p. 2.