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# 紀念 利瑪竇來華四百週年 論文集 中西文化交流國際學術會議

(全一冊)

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光

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## 利瑪竇神父事略

(1552～1610)

利瑪竇Matteo Ricci 義大利人，生於公元一五五二年，天資聰穎，好學強記；年十九，入耶穌會：精通天學（宗教、神學）及俗學（哲學、地理、曆算等科學）。一五八三年，與羅明堅奉派來華，是為天主教繼唐元之後第三次傳入中國並奠定傳教基礎之大傳教士。

利氏初入中國，一字不識，不一二年，盡通中國語文，熟讀中國經書，儒衣儒冠，彬彬有禮，入京朝貢，蒙受明帝優渥；平日除晉接應酬外，更著作譯述、先後多達二十餘種，而用字遣詞，亦請第一流學者如徐光啓、馮應京等為之潤色；所言既皆至理名言，文字亦甚流暢華麗，即如討論科學之幾何原本，梁啟超譽為「字字精金美玉，為千古不朽之作」（見「三百年學衡史」）。其天主教實義一書，更與儒學互為發明，並補充其不足，故當年學術界人士多為之傾倒、而信奉其教，徐光啓、李之藻、楊廷筠等為最著者。又如反對天主教之陳侯光，在其所著「辨學篇言」敘中有「近有大西國夷，航海而來，以事天之學倡，其標號甚尊，其立言甚辨，其持躬甚潔。聞二氏而宗孔子，世或喜而信之，且曰聖人生矣。」利氏之甚為時人推重，可以想見。竺可楨「近代科學先驅徐光啓」文中有「公遇利子瑪竇，而後知西學之足以進德，利用厚生，而為之心折」。

利氏影響我國學術，尤在治學精神，即以科學方法研究學問。梁啟超謂「明朝以八股取士；學界……衰弱可憐……後世清朝一代學者喜歡談經世致用之學，大概受利徐諸人的影響不小」（見「三百年學衡史」）。胡適「在考證學方法的來歷」演說中有「中國近三百年來思想學問皆趨於精密細緻科學化……全係受利瑪竇來華影響……」；則我人紀念利氏來華四百週年，固不僅其為天主教在中國打下深厚之基礎也。

萬曆三十八年（1610）利氏病逝北京，年五十有九，神宗皇帝賜葬阜城外柵欄。

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## POPE'S ADDRESS ON THE WORK OF FATHER RICCI IN CHINA

At the conclusion of the International Convention of Ricci Studies, marking the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Jesuit, Father Ricci, in China, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, delivered an address on the work of the great missionary. The address was given at the Pontifical Gregorian University on October 25.

The Holy Father first addressed a cordial greeting to the participants of the Congress, to the numerous religious personalities present (including Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops), to the laymen, among these also the academic authorities of the University of Macerata (the place of Father Ricci's birth), and to the professors and students of the Pontifical Gregorian University.

After having praised the organizers for the initiatives, both at Macerata and at the Gregorian University, where Father Ricci had received his scientific education, Pope John Paul II proceeded with following discourse:

### **Father Ricci, a "Bridge" between two Civilizations—European and Chinese**

"But, in addition to these two cities, Macerata and Rome, there is a third which was particularly dear to Matteo Ricci: Peking, where the great humanist and missionary carried out his very fruitful activity, and where his tomb is, guarded and venerated by many generation of Chinese.

Father Matteo Ricci's arrival in China represented the culmination of the dream that had animated his brother Jesuit, Francis Xavier, who thirty years earlier, in December 1552, had died at the age of 47 on a small island within sight of the great China. Less than two months before the death of Xavier—who had died without realizing his ambition—Matteo Ricci, the future missionary to China, was born in Macerata. Following in the footsteps of Xavier, he would enter China and win the affection of the Chinese people in a way that would give him a place in the history of its culture.

Other Europeans, such as Marco Polo and the Franciscans, John of Montecorvino and John of Pian del Carpine, had already made some contacts with China during the preceding centuries. Nevertheless, it was Matteo Ricci who first succeeded in inserting himself into the vital fabric of Chinese



culture and society, making the science and the technology of Europe known to many people in that great country; and likewise familiarizing the West with the civilization and the cultural riches of the Chinese people.

A true humanist, gifted with philosophical, theological and artistic culture, with advanced mathematical, astronomical and geographical knowledge and with the most progressive technical application of that epoch, Father Ricci, with his tenacious, humble and respectful dedication succeeded in assimilating the Chinese classical culture to such a profound degree as to become a veritable “bridge” between the two civilizations, European and Chinese.

The important fruits of this work of cultural mediation remain: the numerous writings in the Chinese language, carried out with the intelligent and indispensable assistance of his disciples (primarily of Xu Guangqi and Li Zhizao); his contribution (and that of his Chinese collaborators) to the introduction and the modernization of science and of technology in China; and the materials and letters written in Italian on the various aspects of Chinese culture.

And it is specifically for this highly significant mediation that the Chinese people have reserved an important place in their history for this great humanist and missionary of Macerata.

### **Efforts of Inculturation and the Witness of Social Commitment**

A contribution of such value could not have been given except after a long, dedicated period of cultural preparation and through a profound process of inculturation in the Chinese reality. For this reason, Father Ricci made notable sacrifices to study the language, the habits and customs of the Chinese, so as to make them his own. Father Michele Ruggieri, his companion, wrote in one of his letters to a friend: “We have become Chinese, *ut Christo Sinas lucrificiamus*”.

On his arrival in Macao in 1582, Father Ricci was sent on mission to Zhaoqing in southern China, where he entered upon a long period of experience, of efforts, of reflection on the cultural context in which he was to perform his mission. It was only after 24 years of patient apprenticeship that he succeeded in reaching the heart of China, and in joyfully reaping in Peking, from 1601 to 1610, the fruit of what he had sown with so much patient effort.

At the beginning, like other missionaries, Father Ricci thought of conforming himself to the dress and to the social condition of the Buddhist monks, because he was convinced that acting thus, he would be considered what he truly was, that is, "a man of religion". Later, however, he saw that the religious concept of the surroundings in which he lived was notably different from that of the West: the monks, in fact, were persons who in a certain sense lived on the margin of society. Even their places of worship were ordinarily built outside the centres of population.

Father Matteo Ricci and his companions then decided to carry their religious testimony to the very heart of society, and for this, they adopted the life style of men of letters, involved like them in the social life of the community. In so doing, they wanted to demonstrate that religious faith does not lead to a flight from society, but to a commitment in the world, in view of perfecting the life of society, to the point of openness toward the redemption in Christ and toward the life of grace in the Church.

### **Scientific Contribution and Incarnated Evangelization**

Father Ricci—it has certainly been illustrated in this Congress—intended, in the first place, to open to the Chinese a secure way of improving their efforts of scientific progress, and with real courage, he translated the geometry of Euclid into Chinese. This is a matter of a precious contribution offered by the West to the Chinese world. But obviously, this man from Macerata had other objectives in mind, objectives which he always pursued with profound respect for his listeners. In speaking of the Gospel, he knew how to find the cultural mode that was appropriate to those who were listening to him. He began with a discussion of themes dear to the Chinese people, that is, morality and the rules of social life according to the Confucian tradition, the human and ethical values which he acknowledged with affection. Then he discreetly and indirectly introduced the Christian point of view on the various problems and matters. Thus, without imposing or commanding, he ended up by bringing many of his listeners to the explicit knowledge and to an authentic cult of God, the Supreme Good.

Such a message, so concrete and so full of hope—but at the same time, so respectful of all the positive values of classical Chinese thought—was understood by his disciples and perceived by his numerous friends and visitors.

It was due to such work of inculturation that Father Matteo Ricci succeeded, with the assistance of his Chinese collaborators, in carrying out a work that appeared impossible: that is carefully formulating the Chinese terminology of Catholic theology and liturgy. Thus, he created the conditions for knowing Christ and incarnating his evangelical message and the Church in the context of Chinese culture.

### **Testimony of Evangelical Life and of Chinese Virtues**

The work of inculturation done by Father Ricci did not take place only within the sphere of missionary concepts and missionary work, but also in the sphere of the personal testimony of life. It is necessary, before all else, to bring into relief his exemplary religious life, which in a definitive way contributed to making his doctrine appreciated among those whom he met and taught.

Convinced of the importance that amiability and affability of treatment and of conversation have in the Chinese culture as the expression of gentility of soul, Father Matteo did everything possible to cultivate these virtues, practicing them particularly in the encounters with those who made visits to the residence of the missionaries. Such visits were almost continuous and often required much time and great sacrifice from the missionaries, especially from Father Ricci, because of his knowledge of the Chinese language and culture. In harmony with this style, he offered to his listeners the Chinese translation of Cicero's "*De amicitia*".

Also worthy of note was his extraordinary capacity for winning the esteem and the friendship of a large number of literary people and government officials. Often it was specifically these people who futhered the diffusion of the Gospel and the activity of the missionaries in those parts of China, where they had been sent by the Emperor for their administrative duties.

Already at the outset of his missionary activity, Father Ricci was well aware of having entered upon an adventure that was by no means easy. Particularly painful to him must have been the experience of misunderstanding and suspicion of some of his own brothers at Macao, with regard to his missionary methods, which for them were new and unusual. However, humbly and with trust in God, he was always ready to modify his own ideas and his methods of work, when experience showed that he had entered on