

闢妄醒迷：明清之際的天主教 與「迷信」之建構

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本文分析十七世紀中文世界中「迷信」一詞的形成與意涵，以覘迷信 (superstition)、理性 (reason) 與宗教 (religion) 三詞在近世中國的變遷。

以「迷信」對譯 superstition 的出現於二十世紀，指涉「非理性的信仰」。在此之前，「迷信」一詞只在唐代出現兩次，但卻多次出現在十七世紀的天主教文獻中。十七世紀的「迷信」一詞，不能算是 superstition 的對譯。二十世紀前的「迷信」一詞作動詞用，指的是「沈溺」的行為，而非特定的範疇。而「迷信」的賓語則為不合教規的「偶像崇拜」、「占卜」與娶妾等中國習俗。傳教士與中國信徒以辯駁這些異俗，彰顯十誡中「上帝為最高無上之存在」和「不可淫亂」的誡條。不過，因為天主教的傳入，歐洲 superstition 的概念也悄然進到中國。在天主教神學中 religion 指的是人因信從而與神之間所構成的倫理關係，而 superstition 作為名詞，相對於 religion，指不當的神聖崇拜（對象不對），或以不當的方式崇拜神聖（方式不對）。Superstition 因而指的是「過信」的範疇，而非行為；但這些範疇和中文「迷信」行為的內容亦有重疊之處。為了駁正中國人「迷信」的行為，明、清之際的天主教社群訴諸「理推」(reasoning)，以辯駁中國崇拜與風俗的合理性。康熙八年以後，南懷仁針對楊光先的指控，對中國的占測提出系統性的批評。南懷仁仍沿用「理」辯之術，希望藉開啟讀者靈魂中的明悟，一舉摧毀中國的卜算之術。不久，利類思在《超性學要目錄》中，以「尊奉」恰當地翻譯 religion，卻用「左道」翻譯 superstition，將中國合於此概念下的各種行為皆指為不合法的「師巫邪術」。

在天主教的論述裡，reason 不但不是 religion 的對立，反而是 religion 必要的助力。十七世紀來華的耶穌會士猶確定上帝予人的明悟能燭照俗迷，但在啟蒙運動後的歐洲，宗教與理性的齟齬日深，終至將之推向理性的對立面，成了必須被理性照亮的闇淵。「迷信」一詞在中國的誕生與轉化，恰恰折射出這一歷史過程，並深刻地影響了中國人如何認知信仰的世界。

關鍵詞：迷信 理性 宗教 風俗 耶穌會

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Enlightening the Deluded and Awakening the Bewildered:
Christianity and the Term *Mixin* in
Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century China

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This paper investigates the usage of the term *mixin* (迷信) which now denotes the Chinese rendering of the Western concept of “superstition.” *Mixin* was rarely used in the Chinese language before the twentieth century but appeared several times in Christian documents during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was used as a verb meaning “to indulge in” pagan customs which did not fit Christian expectations, particularly behaviors violating the commandments to honor the Lord and against adultery. When the Jesuits arrived in China, they dealt with local beliefs with caution. They recorded these strange customs and advised their followers not to follow them, but they did not make a concerted effort to dispute them. It was probably literati converts like Zhu Zhongyuan (朱宗元) who initiated the protest against *mixin* behaviors. The Chinese Christian community invoked the concept of classical reason in theology and natural philosophy in order to awaken the Chinese who had gone astray. In their discourses, religion went hand in hand with reason. Later Qing criticism of *mixin* (superstition) relies on a concept of reason formulated during the Enlightenment when religion no longer played an important role in human affairs. Thus, Buddhism, Daoism, the cults of deities, mantic practices, and even Christianity could not be exempt from the accusation of *mixin* in light of reason. The history of the term *mixin* thus reflects the complicated relationship among religion, reason, and superstition and the transformation of these concepts in China and Europe.

Keywords: *mixin*(superstition), reason, religion, custom, the society of Jesus