

## FATHER BOUVET'S PICTURE OF EMPEROR K'ANG HSI (WITH APPENDICES)

By J. J. HEEREN

A small but rather useful book for those interested in K'ang Hsi and in late sixteenth century religious propaganda is Father Bouvet's biography of the great Manchu emperor<sup>1</sup>. Apparently this is the only biography of K'ang Hsi written in a Western language<sup>2</sup>. There are three editions in French, of which the first two were published in Paris and the third at the Hague, and two translations, the one into English and the other into Italian<sup>3</sup>.

Before reviewing the contents of the volume we shall discuss briefly the writer, the purpose of the book and the missionary policy of Louis XIV, king of France, to whom the biography is dedicated.

The author of the book, Joachim Bouvet, was born at Le Mans, France, on July 18, 1656<sup>4</sup>. Little seems to be known of his early life. He was one of the six Jesuits selected by Louis XIV for the mission in China. Before leaving France he and his five<sup>4</sup> associates were admitted to the "Académie des Sciences"

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de l'Empereur de la Chine présentée au Roy*, par le P. J. Bouvet, de la Compagnie de Jesus, Missionnaire de la Chine. A la Haye, chez Meyndert Uytwerf, Marchand Librairie dans le Hofstraet, près la cour. MDCXCIX.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Bibliotheca Sinica* (Cordier), cols. 634—639.

<sup>3</sup> *Cinq lettres inédites du Père Gerbillon, S. J., Missionnaire français à Peking*. (XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles; publiées par M. Henri Cordier, p. 461. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 273 (cf. Bouvet, Joachim), however, says that the date of his birth is unknown.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs and Observations Made in a late Journey through the Empire of China*, by Louis Le Comte, Jesuit; translated from the Paris edition; the third edition corrected; London: printed for Benjamin Tooke, at the Middle Temple-Gate in Fleetstreet. 1699. P. 4. One of their number, Father Tachard, after reaching Siam, returned to France at the request of the King of Siam.



"CANG-HY

Empereur de la Chine et de la Tartarie Orientale Agé de 44."

The above is the frontispiece in Father Bouvet's Book.

and commissioned to collect various scientific data. Sailing from Brest on March 3, 1685, Bouvet<sup>1</sup> together with Gerbillon, Le Comte, Fontaney and Videlou set out for the Far East; after spending some time in Siam, they finally reached Peking, on February 7, 1688, where they were favorably received by the Emperor. K'ang Hsi kept Fathers Bouvet and Gerbillon at the Imperial Court and made them his instructors in mathematics and philosophy. So well pleased was the Emperor with their instruction that he gave them a site within the imperial city for a church and a residence<sup>2</sup>. In 1699 K'ang Hsi sent Father Bouvet back to France to be the bearer of gifts from the Emperor to Louis XIV and to secure new missionaries for China. In 1699 Bouvet returned with a number of recruits<sup>3</sup>, and "both the emperor and the heir apparent were reported to be well pleased with the arrival of Father Bouvet"<sup>4</sup>. From 1708 to 1715 Father Bouvet together with other missionaries, was engaged "in a survey of the empire and the preparation of maps of the various provinces"<sup>5</sup>. After a missionary career of nearly fifty years, he died in Peking on June 28, 1732<sup>6</sup>.

The purpose of the Father's book is to stimulate and to maintain the interest of Louis XIV in the China mission. He appeals to the king's pride in passages like this. "What fortune,

1 Le Comte, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

2 *The General History of China, etc.*, done from the French of P. du Halde, London; printed by and for John Watts; MDCCXXXVI. Vol. I, p. 497.

3 *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. II, p. 273) says "In 1699 Father Bouvet arrived a second time in China, accompanied by ten missionaries", while Bannister in his *Journal* (cf. note 4) and [Fr. Froger, ed. Voretzsch, p. 2 (cf. note 5 on p.)] says, "The Reverend Father Bouvet took out with him in the ship seven missionary Jesuits, a Brother, and an Italian painter, named Ghirardini", which makes only nine. A possible explanation is that one missionary may have joined them en route.

4 *A Journal of the First French Embassy to China, 1698—1700*; translated by Saxe Bannister, M. A., Thomas Cantley Newby, Publisher; 1859, p. 2.

5 *Nouvel Atlas de la Chine, de la Tartarie Chinoise, et du Thibet etc.* par Mr. d'Anville; à la Haye, chez Henri Scheurleer, MDCCXXXVII; cf. Avertissement. Also *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 273 on "Bouvet, Joachim".

6 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 273 on "Bouvet, Joachim".

for your reign that our arts and sciences have reached the peak under the protection of Your Majesty so that they have inspired the Emperor of China to favor our holy religion!"<sup>1</sup> In another passage he maintains that the conversion of K'ang Hsi would mean "the greatest advantage possible to the Church, as well as the greatest glory for the reign of Your Majesty, for whom Heaven seems to have reserved the honor of making a greater contribution to the advancement of the Church than any other Prince"<sup>2</sup>.

Besides appealing to the French monarch's sense of pride the book as a whole concerns itself with the attempt to present K'ang Hsi in such a light that Louis XIV will be ready and willing to send additional missionaries, more specifically French Jesuits, to China. This was not an unreasonable undertaking. His purpose was not only crowned with success, but it was also quite in accord with the policy of Louis XIV, because such a policy "was thought so glorious to his Majesty's Reign, and so advantageous to Religion". Louis XIV ordered Colbert to prepare the "necessary Instruments, for a considerable Number of Mathematicians, bound for China"<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, according to du Halde, Louis XIV "gratified them with settled Salaries and magnificent Presents"<sup>4</sup>; or in other words, looked after their financial needs. Another indication that these French missionaries were in favor with the Grand Monarch is the fact that Bouvet and his recruits returned to China in 1699 on board of the French war vessel *Amphitrite*, which brought out the first French embassy to China<sup>5</sup>.

With these preliminary observations disposed of, we can now proceed to reproduce and examine the main features of Father Bouvet's picture of the great Manchu Emperor.

K'ang Hsi, the son and successor of Sun Chih, is forty-four

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167.

3 Le Comte, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

4 Du Halde, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 495.

5 Saxe-Bannister, *op. cit.*, pp. 1—2. See also François Froger, *Relation du premier voyage des François à la Chine fait en 1698, 1699 et 1700 sur le vaisseau "l'Amphitrite"* herausgeg. von E. A. Voretzsch, Verlag Asia Major, Leipzig, 1926, pp. VIII—X.

years of age and in the thirty-sixth year of his reign. He has an air of majesty, a well proportioned body, a stature somewhat above the average height, an aquiline nose, traces of small-pox which do not detract at all from the charm radiated by his person<sup>1</sup>.

This prince from his ascension to the throne tried to make himself agreeable to both the Manchus and the Chinese; to the former by perfecting himself in the warlike exercises of hunting and shooting, which they prize so highly, and to the latter by cultivating the arts and sciences. As to shooting he can handle the bow and arrow with either the right or the left hand, whether on foot or on horse-back, whether standing still or in a gallop. Moreover, he is no less familiar with the use of European fire-arms<sup>2</sup>.

These exercises, however, do not keep him from having a taste for music, especially for that of the Europeans, and he plays European instruments as well as those of the Chinese and the Manchus<sup>3</sup>.

K'ang Hsi is an approachable sovereign. Whenever he goes on his hunting trips, any subject may kneel near the road on which the Emperor is to pass and have his request or his complaint against an official taken directly to the Emperor<sup>4</sup>.

1 I.e. Comte, in *op. cit.* p. 40, however, says, "full Visag'd, disfigur'd with the Small Pox". Ides, Russian ambassador, in his *Three Years Travels from Moscow over-land to China etc.* London: W. Freeman, 1706, p. 72, says, "he was very much pitted with the Small Pox".

2 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 14. K'ang Hsi was undoubtedly a great hunter, but the writer has not found any other person confirming Bouvet's contention that the Emperor was such an excellent shot.

3 Bouvet, *op. cit.* p. 14. Father Ripa in his *Memoirs of Father Ripa, during Thirteen Years of Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China* (Selected and translated from the Italian) London: John Murray; 1844, p. 63, says, "The Emperor supposed himself to be an excellent musician ... but he knew nothing of music ... There was a cymbal or spinet in almost every apartment, but neither he nor his lackies could play upon them." The writer is inclined to believe that Fathers Bouvet and Ripa both exaggerate; the one K'ang Hsi's excellencies and the other his deficiencies in the matter of music.

4 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 18--21. K'ang Hsi dealt with this matter of presenting petitions to him in a decree, issued in the 5th lunar month of the 8th year of his reign, which reads:

"In fact", says the Father, "we have often seen rather prominent officials, even those standing near the Emperor, accused in this way, dismissed and severely punished according to their deserts."<sup>1</sup>

The Emperor has a remarkable memory; any affair of which one has once spoken to him or the name of any person whom he has met in passing he never forgets. In a voyage on which P. Verbiest accompanied him, K'ang Hsi asked the Father for the name of the bird in Flemish (Verbiest's native language). Although Verbiest had several times previously told the Emperor the name of this bird, he could not recall its name at the time, whereupon K'ang Hsi gave its name in Flemish<sup>2</sup>.

In comparison with the rest of his race K'ang Hsi is a man of compassion. After his forces had taken the Russian fortress of Albazin, he did not have the prisoners killed as was the usual custom among the northern nomads. The Russians who wished to return to Russia, he sent back at China's expense. Of those who wished to remain he sent a part to Liao Tung and others to Peking; to each one he gave a house, some land and a number of servants, at the same time allowing them to keep the rank they held in the Russian army<sup>3</sup>.

"The Emperor instructs the Board of Punishments 'Wherever I travel there are those who petition the Emperor. If we do not differentiate between the false and the true, but immediately punish the petitioners because they violate the law and etiquette, injustice might result; one cannot tell. I order that after this, you differentiate the accused; punish the false ones with forty stripes, but do not banish any'. "From the *Tu Ch'ing Shêng Tsu Jen Huang Ti Shêng Hsün* (大清聖祖仁皇帝聖訓卷二十八).

This decree gives the impression that petitions could not be presented to the Emperor quite as informally as Bouvet asserts.

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 21.

2 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 23.

3 Bouvet's correctness at this point can be seriously questioned. Prisoners were taken at Albazin (captured in 1685) and brought to Peking; "but certainty vanishes the moment one attempts to get precise details of the events". Cf. *Some Early Russo-Chinese Relations*, by Gaston Cahen (translated and edited by W. Sheldon Ridge); Shanghai, 1914, p. 115.

Moreover, Sparthary in his Journal (cf. John F. Braddley's *Russia, Mongolia, China*, pp. 377, 378) says, "There were now in China (i. e. 1675--1677) thirteen Russians of whom only two were captured on the Amoor. All the rest are deserters from the frontier forts, especially from Albazin. Three ran away last year, there being no difficulty in doing so

The Emperor was also generous in his treatment of the Czar's envoys. The Muscovites confessed to Fathers Pereyra and Gerbillon, who were at the peace conference following the war between Russia and China, that it was the good and generous treatment Russian subjects had received at the hands of K'ang Hsi which had induced the Czar to send representatives to a conference called for the purpose of establishing peace and of delimiting the Sino-Russian frontiers<sup>1</sup>.

In nothing is the sagacity of the Emperor more clearly revealed than in the manner in which he handled the revolts against himself. He crushed them all<sup>2</sup>. The leaders of the revolt together with their sons, of whatever age the latter might be, were executed in accordance with the customary treatment of rebels. Although K'ang Hsi did not approve such severity<sup>3</sup>,

because they escape down the Amoor river to the Shingala (Sungari) where the Manchus take them without delay to Peking. Here the Khan assigns them wages, has them married, and entered into his service." It seems much more probable that the recipients of the favors mentioned by Bouvet were Russian deserters rather than Russian prisoners of war.

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, p. 28. The reference here is to the Nipuchu Conference in 1689 at which Russia and China agreed upon the treaty of Nipuchu, also called the Treaty of Nerchinsk, which secured peace between the two nations for one hundred and sixty years. Father Pereyra and Gerbillon accompanied the Chinese representatives, acted as interpreters at the Conference and did much to facilitate the establishment of peace.

2 It is a historical fact that the Emperor's success in crushing the revolts was due more to disunion among the rebels than to his own military ability.

3 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 41. The Chinese criminal code of his time was very severe, and K'ang Hsi was most careful to see to it that no one should be punished innocently or excessively. The following edict, issued during the 11th lunar month of the 40th year of his reign, is typical of the Emperor's attitude:

"The Emperor informs the Grand Secretary, 'The verdicts of this year's autumn term I have all carefully reviewed. There are many mistakes in composition; yet the bearing (of these verdicts) on men's lives is very great. There should not be one incorrect word or sentence; but from the 7th month until now the Nine Boards have not found a single mistake; yet they alone are responsible. Is such laziness and carelessness fitting? For the Board of Punishments not to go carefully over these verdicts is most reprehensible. I order that these cases be turned over to the Censorate. I notice that the Board of Punishments itself is making many mistakes. I go over all these things most carefully; and if only one character is wrong I

he had to yield to the princes of the blood and to the various tribunals which insisted on enforcing the laws of the country.

The Emperor is very careful in overseeing the government of China; scarcely had we arrived in Peking when four Grand Secretaries (two of whom were Chinese and two Manchus) as well as the chiefs of the six boards were all dismissed. The following year the Viceroy of Chekiang was relieved of his post and banished to Tartary for his attack on Christianity<sup>1</sup>.

Although without doubt the most powerful prince of the whole world, K'ang Hsi's whole mode of life is most simple and frugal. In comparison with the other princes of Asia his life is one of extreme simplicity. In order to keep in condition and to set a good example to the Manchus lest they fall into the ease and luxury of the Chinese, he spends from two to three consecutive months a year hunting in Tartary under the most trying conditions<sup>2</sup>.

Not only is the Emperor a great hunter but also a noted student. He has memorized a considerable portion of the Chinese classics, and he writes polished Chinese as well as Manchu. Through the missionaries he has learned a great deal of the European sciences, especially philosophy, astronomy and mathematics<sup>3</sup>. He spends two or three hours a day in study with Fathers Gerbillon and Bouvet.

During this period of study K'ang Hsi fell seriously sick. After the native physicians failed to cure, he turned to the missionaries who succeeded in effecting a cure by the use of quinine recently brought from Europe by Fathers Fontaney and Visdelou. It seems that Heaven wished to reward this sovereign for the liberty he granted the Church during the preceding year<sup>4</sup>. This cure gives us a very easy access to the Em-

correct it. After this, you all ought to be more careful!" From the *Ta Ch'ing Shêng Tsu Jen Huang Ti Shêng Hsün*.

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 47.

2 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-72.

3 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-92. Father Ripa, *op. cit.*, p. 63, however, says "The Emperor supposed himself to be an excellent musician, and a still better mathematician; but though he had a taste for the sciences and other acquirements in general, he knew nothing of music, and scarcely understood the first elements of mathematics."

4 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-108.

peror. He converses with us about European sciences, customs, habits and news. At no point are we more prepared to talk or he to listen, than when the subject of conversation concerns the glorious deeds of Louis the Great<sup>1</sup>.

The Emperor shows a keen interest in Christianity; reads various treatises on the subject, and often discusses religious matters with the Jesuits. He has frequently said that judging by its present progress Christianity will one day become the dominant religion in China<sup>2</sup>.

The Emperor is a man of great self-control. Although there are in the palace grounds a large number of women at his disposal, K'ang Hsi is so far from abandoning himself to voluptuousness that he seems to resort to various ways and means of keeping himself away from them<sup>3</sup>.

The Emperor takes great care to keep his army in condition by means of drills and manoeuvres in the spring and the autumn. To increase the efficiency of the army he has cast, and still casts, many mortars and cannons after European models. He has also many small bronze pieces which are mounted by

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

2 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 112, 113. There is abundant evidence that at this period of his life K'ang Hsi showed considerable interest in Christianity, but it must always remain a debatable question as to what extent he was actuated by policy rather than by conviction.

In his recent book René Fülöp-Miller gives the text of a letter of K'ang Hsi to Pope Clement, said to be deposited in the archives of the French Foreign Office, in which the Emperor proposes marriage to a niece of the Holy Father. One wonders whether such a letter is genuine, but the author does not raise this problem. Cf. *Macht und Geheimnis der Jesuiten* von René Fülöp-Miller; 1929; Grethlein & Co.; Leipzig/Zürich, pp. 290, 291.

3 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 118, 119. Father Bouvet gives here an impression that is entirely too favorable to K'ang Hsi. Le Comte, *op. cit.*, p. 60, says, "The Number of the Emperor's Wives or Concubines is not easily known, it being very great and never fixed." Ides, the Russian ambassador (cf. Ides, *op. cit.*, p. 64), expresses the same idea in this way: "Prosecuting our Journey we passed by a City inhabited only by the Emperor's Concubines, and their Retinue, where the Monarch stays several Days when he goes a hunting." In another passage Ides (*op. cit.*, p. 108) says, "the Emperor himself is, in his Heart, a good Christian, but cannot possibly quit any of his 1236 Wives".

means of a gun-carriage, entirely his own invention, on the backs of horses and mules<sup>1</sup>.

With the hope of reviving the fine arts in his empire, having heard of the flourishing academies established by Louis the Great, the Emperor five years ago established an Academy of Painting, Engraving and Sculpture. In order to stimulate artistic taste K'ang Hsi often lets the artists use European, especially Parisian, models<sup>2</sup>.

For the education of the princes the Emperor chooses the most learned scholars of the Imperial College; yet he keeps the most minute oversight in the details of their instruction, in which physical exercises take a large place. When they can scarcely walk, the princes are made to ride horses and to shoot with the bow and arrow, as well as fire-arms. Sometimes, when they are as young as nine or ten years, they have to accompany their father on his hunting trips in order to become physically hardened<sup>3</sup>.

What we, however, consider of the greatest advantage is the interest shown both by the Emperor and the Heir Apparent in Christianity. On a trip in Tartary the Heir Apparent asked Father Gerbillon about God, which gave the Father the opportunity to preach a short sermon. At another time he explained to him a passage of Scripture. Just as extraordinary as this, however, is the respect and protection given our Religion by the two highest ministers of the state<sup>4</sup>.

To put it in a word, he is like Your Majesty in so many points that like you, he is one of the world's most accomplished monarchs. He has allowed your Jesuits to live in the palace precincts and to build there a big church. He has issued an edict

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 124—127; also Le Comte, *op. cit.*, p. 369. The museums in the Forbidden City of Peking possess a number of these cannons cast for K'ang Hsi by the Catholic missionaries.

2 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 130, 131.

3 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 138—140.

4 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 144—152. Due in large measure to the so-called Rites Controversy K'ang Hsi later gradually changed his attitude towards Christianity. Those interested in this change of the Emperor's attitude will find it of interest and value to read *The Jesuits in China and the Legation of Cardinal de Tournon* by Robert C. Jenkins, M. A., London, David Nutt. 1894. Cf. also Appendices A and B of this article.

permitting his subjects to embrace Christianity<sup>1</sup>. Now this Monarch orders me to come to France to ask that Your Majesty send as many as possible French Jesuits like those sent previously. The Emperor hopes with such recruits together with the Jesuits already in the palace to establish a sort of branch of your Royal Academy. Experience shows us that the sciences are the principal methods by means of which God wishes to plant the Christian faith in China. God inspired you some years ago to send some of your subjects, Jesuits, to China, and it seems that Heaven has reserved for Louis the Great to do more for the kingdom of Jesus Christ in this country than any other prince<sup>2</sup>.

Such is the main argument of this little booklet of 171 pages. The volume is a notable piece of religious and missionary propaganda. Moreover, it was successful, because in 1699 Father Bouvet returned to China together with seven Jesuits, a lay brother, and the Italian painter, Ghirardini (cf. note 3 on p. 558). There is no doubt that at the time Father Bouvet was appealing to Louis XIV, K'ang Hsi was favorably disposed to the Jesuit missionaries, whom he used very much as some of the foreign advisers are now employed by the Chinese government.

When one reads the Memoirs of Father Ripa (cf. note 3 on p. 560), who was not a Jesuit, one cannot escape the impression that Father Bouvet overstated the excellencies of K'ang Hsi as a man, as well as his real interest in Christianity aside from reasons of state policy. At any rate the literature of the Rites Controversy as well as the Emperor's later edicts abundantly prove that during the latter part of his life K'ang Hsi's attitude towards Christianity and the missionaries was very different from what it was at the time when Father Bouvet penned his book<sup>3</sup>.

1 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 156. The reference here is to K'ang Hsi's famous Edict of Toleration, issued in 1692. For an English translation of the text cf. Le Comte, *op. cit.*, pp. 466--468.

2 Bouvet, *op. cit.*, pp. 159--167.

3 Cf. the writer's article *Bishop Della Chiesa and the Story of his Lost Grave* in the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. LIV (1923), pp. 189--191. Also the Appendices to this article.

## APPENDIX A

I. Pope Clement XI's Decree, or Bull, "Ex illa die" (March 19, 1715) in Condensed Form (the following is a translation of the Chinese condensation and translation of the Latin text)<sup>1</sup>.

"Pope Clement XI makes known forever to all men. From the day of our assuming the papal office until the present we have been busy with many things. Among these we consider the various disputes in China of the utmost importance. The Chinese have several words and various ceremonies which many foreigners say are not fit for use, while others maintain that they are permissible. On account of this, both parties have sent letters to us accusing each other; wanting us to decide the matter. We have decided that the foreigners must stand together. At the time of Innocent XII the consideration of these matters was undertaken; but because he died, the decision has devolved upon us. We have examined very carefully the accusations of both sides. On November 20, 1704, these matters were decided as follows:

1) When Westerners speak of the Lord of Heaven and Earth they use the word 'deus', which cannot be used in Chinese. Accordingly for a long time, foreigners in China as well as the Chinese who had entered the Church used *T'ien Chu* (天主). Henceforth we do not allow the use of the word 'Heaven' (天) nor of the words 'Shang Ti' (上帝).

*T'ien Chu* (天主), the Lord of Heaven and Earth, is the only name to be used. If tablets with the words *Ching T'ien* (敬天) have been made but not exposed, they are not to be hung out. If they have already been exposed in Catholic Churches, they must be taken down and not used.

1 The Chinese originals of Appendices A and B were found, in 1925, by Chinese investigators in the archives of the Forbidden City in Peking. As far as the writer is aware these originals have never been published. The original Latin text of *Ex illa die* is about four times as voluminous as the Chinese condensation.

For a French translation of the entire Latin document cf. pages 243--251, Vol. I of *Histoire de la mission de Pékin* par A. Thomas, Paris: Louis Michaud, 1923. *Ex illa die* was published on March 19, 1715.

2) In spring and autumn, at the time of the Confucian sacrifices as well as at the times of the ancestral sacrifices, all who are Church members are prohibited from sacrificing or from helping at these sacrifices. They must not stand by, for these practices are superstitious.

3) All officials and literati who have entered the Catholic Church are forbidden to go to the Confucian temples on the first and the fifteenth of each month to perform the ceremonies. Newly appointed officials and those who have recently received their degrees are also not allowed to go to the Confucian temples to perform these ceremonies.

4) All members of the Catholic Church are forbidden to go to the ancestral halls to perform the ancestral ceremonies or serve at them.

5) All members of the Catholic Church, whether at home or at the graves or at funerals must refrain from performing these ceremonies. When members of our religion meet those of other religions they are not to perform such ceremonies, because they are superstitious. Again, if members of the Catholic Church say, 'I have never performed the ceremonies; I only show gratitude; I do not ask for blessings nor escape from calamity'; this also is not allowed.

6) If members of the Catholic Church, when they meet members of other religions performing such ceremonies, should criticize these ceremonies, trouble might arise. It is better to stand by; this is permissible.

7) All members of the Catholic Church are prohibited from putting up ancestral tablets in their homes, in accordance with Chinese custom, because they have the terms *ling wei* (靈位) and *shen chu* (神主), which means that the spirits reside in the tablets.

If tablets are desired, it is permissible to put on only the name of the deceased, providing the making of the tablet involves nothing superstitious. With these conditions met, they may be set up in the homes, but beside the tablets there must be written the Chinese doctrine of honoring father and mother.

Although we have decided the above in this fashion, there are in China, besides those mentioned, other ceremonies not in the least superstitious and not at all similar to superstitions;

as for example, the teachings concerning the regulation of the family and the government of the country; all these may be observed. Whether or not they may be performed is to be decided by the papal legate; if the legate is not in China, then by the one in charge and by the bishops. Things that are not in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church may be performed, while those that are in opposition are not to be performed.

The above ceremonies were again prohibited by the Decree of September 25, 1710. After much investigation, it was decided to prohibit them in accordance with this Decree, which we sent to China on January 25, 1707, by the Legate de Tournon. He reached the same decision and prohibited them in accordance with the said Decree, in which we also forbid them. Hereafter we shall not again entertain the representations of any, whether high or low. On September 25, 1710, we gave our decision, and the matter is now closed. There are still some who do not obey. We hear that there are foreigners in China who assert that we have suspended the execution of the Decree; others say that the promulgation of the Decree is not clear; some say that the explanation of the Decree has not yet reached China, while still others maintain that on March 23, 1656, Pope Alexander VII allowed the proscribed rites. All these we reject, and therefore on March 19, 1715, we again issued a Decree prohibiting them; and sent it to China in order to have it clearly explained and rigidly executed. Let all foreigners in China know that they too are to obey it, otherwise we shall punish them in accordance with the regulations of the Catholic Church. Hereafter, all foreign missionaries in China or those intending to go to China as missionaries, must before undertaking such work, take an oath before God strictly to obey this Mandate prohibiting the said rites; and after the oath has been taken, the signed oath is to be sent to Rome."

## II. K'ang Hsi's Own Marginal Comment on the Above Decree<sup>1</sup>.

"After reading this Decree, I can only say that foreigners are small people. How can they talk about China's moral prin-

<sup>1</sup> In the original Chinese document this comment follows immediately

ciples? Furthermore, there is not one foreigner who can read Chinese books; much of what they say and discuss makes one laugh. To-day I saw the papal legate and the Decree; he is really like Buddhist or Taoist priests and the superstitions mentioned are those of unimportant religions. This sort of wild talk could not be more extreme. Hereafter, foreigners are not to preach in China. It (i. e. preaching) should be prohibited; it will avoid trouble."

#### APPENDIX B

##### A Decree Showing K'ang Hsi's Critical Attitude Towards the Missionaries.

###### "Decree Concerning Foreigners<sup>1</sup>."

"K'ang Hsi: 59. Year (1720): 11. Month: 18. Day.

"The Emperor asks Suarez, Bouvet, Parrenin, Mourão, Kogler, Slavizek, Cordoso, Ni T'ien-chueh (?), Du Tartare, Regis, Mailla, Prèmare, Fridelli, da Costa, Rousset, Simonelli, de Magalhaës, and D'Entrecolles to come to the 'Nan Kuo' of the Ch'ien Ch'ing Palace."

The Emperor tells you Westerners that for more than two hundred years since the coming of Matthew Ricci there was no greediness or immorality, but only the life and practice of religion, without trouble or violation of China's laws. They (i. e. the foreign missionaries) came from the West, a distance of ninety thousand 'li'.

I have compassion and pity on men from a distance: which proves that the Emperor of China does not differentiate between foreigners and natives; and I let each one make his own contribution according to what he can do best, letting you come to the Palace and thus showing you my good will.

after the condensed Decree, *Ex illa die*. It is written in red ink supposedly in K'ang Hsi's own handwriting.

<sup>1</sup> The original seems to have been written by K'ang Hsi himself and has various corrections in red ink by the same writer. Even if the Emperor was interested in Christianity in the last decade of the seventeenth century, as Father Bouvet pictures him, it is abundantly clear that towards the end of his life his attitude was very different.

The Church you propagate is neither good nor bad for China; and whether you remain or leave will make no difference. When De Tournon came, he listened to the missionary Maigrot<sup>1</sup>, who did not understand, who had no knowledge of *wen li* and who made unreasonable criticisms. If Maigrot had known only a little Chinese, it would be excusable. Not only does he not know literary Chinese but he cannot even read. How can he determine the right and wrong of China's moral principles? For example, he said that Heaven (天) was a material thing and not to be worshipped. But if for example, a memorial of thanks be sent to the Emperor, you must address the Emperor as 'Your Majesty'. Again, if you pass by the Emperor's throne, you must show respect; all of which is only being respectful to the ruler. This is done everywhere.

Suppose you considered 'Your Majesty' a material thing and the throne as made by a carpenter! How could you be so disrespectful? The reverence of the Chinese for Heaven (天) is like this. According to Maigrot the Lord of Heaven (天主) is the name that must be worshipped. This is very different from the Chinese idea of worshipping Heaven (天). According to you Westerners the purpose of cultivating the religious life is to submit the soul to the Lord of Heaven (天主), and therefore the denials of your life are for the soul's eternal good. The worship of ancestral tablets in China is based upon the memory of our fathers and mothers, who brought us up. To illustrate; if the mother of small birds dies, the little birds will mourn for days, thinking about their parent. Furthermore, man, the crown of creation, will naturally express outwardly what he feels inwardly. You missionaries, if your parents die, also mourn. If you did not care, you would be inferior to the animals; how could you then be compared to the Chinese who worship Confucius? The sages hold to the principles of the five virtues and the five relationships, which have been taught for generations, and which make people loyal to their rulers.

The learning of de Tournon and Maigrot is very superficial. How can they speak about Heaven (天); what do they know

<sup>1</sup> This was Charles Maigrot, a Frenchman and appointed Bishop of Conon in 1696, who had been commissioned by Popes Innocent XI and Innocent XII to examine the question of the rites.



about respecting the sages? When de Tournon came to China, he listened to the falsehoods of narrow, unreliable missionaries who turn right and wrong upside down and ruin your work. Now your Pope sends a legate to bring felicitations. If the legate asks you about your missionary work, you should all answer, 'missionary work in China follows the precepts of Ricci'.

The Emperor knows that you have been in China many years. Furthermore, when you came to China, you sent a memorial felicitating me and thanking the Emperor for his kindness to the Westerners.

If you wish to say anything to me, you should send a memorial to the Emperor. If I do not answer, you should not individually express your opinions and make irresponsible replies, upsetting the conceptions of right and wrong. Each one should carefully observe this, because for this reason I issue this Edict."

Chinese Text of Decree cited in Note 4 p. 560

康熙八年己酉五月癸巳朔

上諭刑部凡行幸之處有叩關者若不審明事之虛實遽照衝突儀仗律則此內或有冤枉亦未可定以後著審明所告之事虛者責四十板免其充軍

Chinese Text of Decree cited in Note 3 p. 562

康熙四十年辛巳十一月甲午

上諭大學士等曰歲內秋審重案朕皆一一詳閱其字句錯誤處甚多此皆人命案件關係最重即一字一句不可錯誤乃九卿等自七月至今閱視數月其字句錯誤處並未看出一二何也此屬伊等專任似此怠忽不加詳慎可乎刑部判此檔案先不詳審殊屬不合著交都察院嚴察議奏近看部院事件亦多錯誤朕凡事詳閱即一字之訛亦為改正嗣後爾等宜加敬慎毋忽